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SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2011

Where are we?

2010 CENSUS DATA | *Connecting the dots...*

Harrisburg Ranks 4th for Same-sex Couples

By Frank Pizzoli

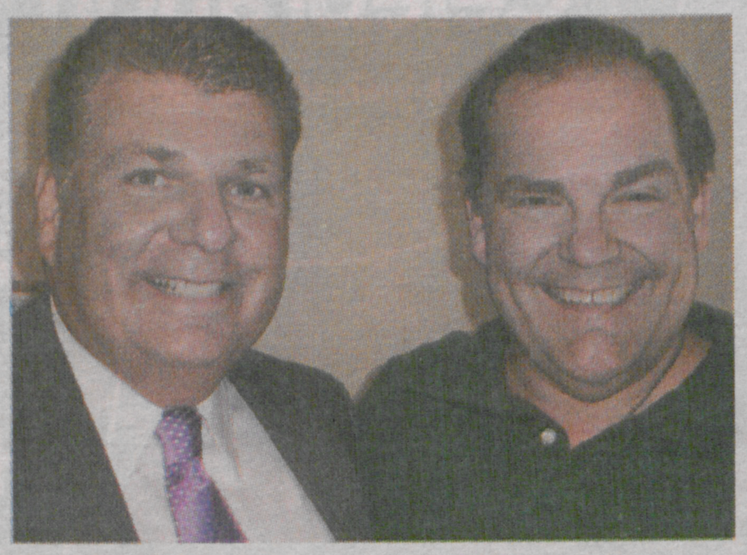
Eva O'Diam and her partner, Mary Nell, came to Harrisburg in 1991 and never left.

"I've built my practice and intend to stay in the area even when I retire," said Nell, 73, an IRS enrollment agent for H&R Block.

O'Diam, 57, an ordained minister and human service professional, moved here to become pastor to the city's Metropolitan Community Church of the Spirit and, like her partner, has no plans to leave.

Both are lesbians, and both are comfortable being honest about their relationship with their neighbors and co-workers.

They simply introduce each other as partners. "Being lesbian is just a part of who I am," Nell said.



The couple are part of a growing number of same-sex couples who have found a home in historically conservative central Pennsylvania.

Harrisburg has the fourth highest concentration of same-sex households among cities and boroughs in the state, a rate of 15.45 per 1,000, according to an analysis of 2010 US Census data figures released by UCLA's William's Institute.

The other three locations, in descending order, were, New Hope (58.55), Lansdowne (18.36), Wilkinsburg (15.76), and Morrisville (13.99).

The numbers are small, but the true count is most likely higher since the data does not count individuals. However, the census offers at least a baseline estimate of how strong the LGBT community is.

"Census data have been incredibly important in LGBT-related policy debates," said Dr. Gary Gates, of UCLA's Williams Center. "They show how same-sex couples are very often economically and demographically similar to their different-sex counterparts and yet are treated differently under the law."

Gates tells Central Voice the data can be used to break long-held stereotypes about the LGBT community, including the notion they all live in large cities. "The concentration of same-sex couples is actually higher in Pike County and in Harrisburg than in Philadelphia," Gates said.

At Penbrook United Church of Christ, where O'Diam and Nell worship, their relationship has been embraced. But, O'Diam admits, she is careful in the larger and vastly conservative community outside the church's door.

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Couples who call Harrisburg home, *Clockwise from top: Mary Nell, 73, left, and her partner of 20 years Eva O'Diam, 57.*

Ken Suter, 48, left, with partner David Zwifka, 55.

Jessica Adams, 32, left, and Jessica Myers, 31.

Brianna Van Arseale, right, 20, with girlfriend Emily Rowe, 20.

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Don't miss these special events

COMING UP ONLY AT CLUB XS

Saturday 9/3:
Foam Party

Saturday 9/24:
DJ Drew G

Saturday 10/1:
5th Anniversary Celebration
Check web site for details

Saturday 10/29:
Annual Halloween Bash

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Poll Shows Statewide Support for Non-discrimination Bill

State Rep. Dan Frankel, D-Allegheny, recently unveiled a statewide poll indicating sustained strong support for legislation that would protect people who live or work in Pennsylvania from discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

Frankel is the lead House sponsor of the bill (H.B. 300), which would address discrimination in employment, housing, credit and public accommodations. State Sen. Pat Browne, R-Lehigh/Northampton/Monroe, plans to introduce the legislation in the Senate.

"Support for this bill has remained constant over the past eight years, solid at roughly 70 percent. The overwhelming majority of Pennsylvanians – regardless of region or political party – support it. They know being gay or transgendered has nothing to do with a person's ability to fix a car or computer, or to show up on time and to do a good day's work," Frankel said.

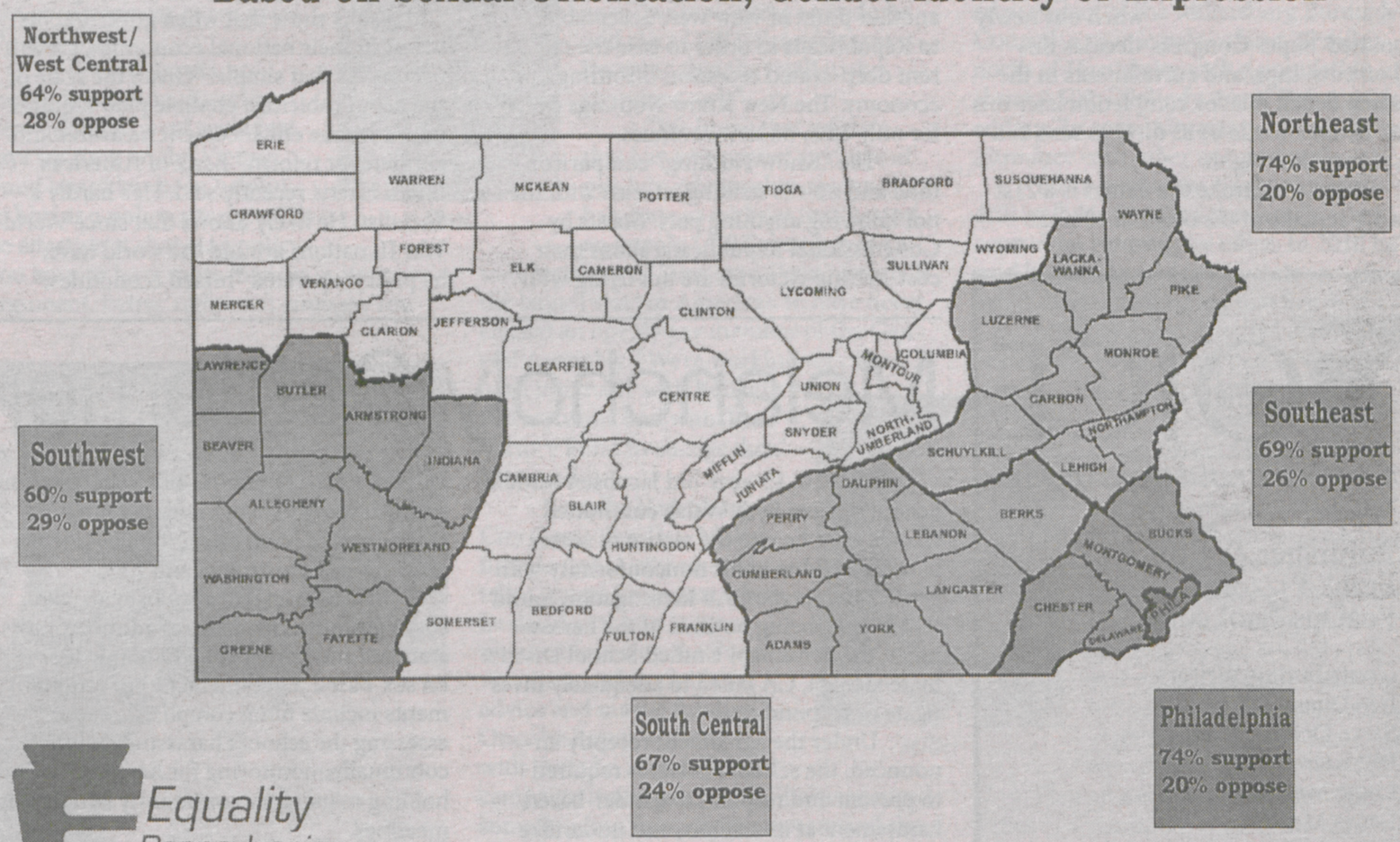
The poll was conducted last February on the views of 1,200 registered voters for Equality Pennsylvania by Susquehanna Polling and Research, a firm with many Republican and business clients.

"The poll results show not only the basic fairness of Pennsylvanians, but their consistency as well," remarked Equality Pennsylvania Executive Director, Ted Martin.

"This is the third poll in a row that we have commissioned showing very strong support for this type of legislation. In 2003, the results were 67% in favor, in 2007 it was 70% in favor and today the number is 69%. Not only have people NOT wavered in their view that this type of discrimination is just plain wrong, they have stayed fiercely loyal to that point. Companies would kill to have this kind of loyalty when it comes to their products and we are thankful to see this level of support in Pennsylvania year after year."

The poll indicates strong support among many different types of people. For example, a majority of "self-described" conservatives (60%), liberals (80%) and moderates (75%) supported the bill, as did a majority of both males and females (at 69%); a majority of Republicans (61%), Democrats (74%) and Independents (74%); and a majority 18-44 year olds (73%), voters 45-59 yrs. olds (66%) and 60+ yrs. (67%).

Pennsylvanians Support Legislation Banning Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity or Expression



Equality Pennsylvania
http://www.equalitypa.org/

PA statewide poll conducted by Susquehanna Polling and Research
February 8-17, 2011 with 1,200 registered voters, Margin of Error = +/-3.58%

Essentially, new poll – the third EP survey - shows that by a more than 2:1 margin (or 69% to 24%), Pennsylvanians support passage of legislation banning discrimination against individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity or expression on matters dealing with the workplace, public housing and public accommodations; 6% of voters said they are undecided.

"The poll results show not only the basic fairness of Pennsylvanians, but their consistency as well," remarked Equality Pennsylvania Board President, Brian Sims.

Frankel said, "It is time for Pennsylvania to catch up to the 21 states and the District of Columbia that ban discrimination based on sexual orientation. Twelve of those and the District of Columbia also ban discrimination based on gender identity. We should be a leader, not a follower, on this issue.

"In addition to making state law more fair and just, this would make Pennsylvania more economically competitive. We are surrounded on three of four sides by states that ban anti-gay discrimination – Maryland, New Jersey, Delaware and New York. They have a competitive advantage over Pennsylvania when it comes to attracting and retaining businesses and residents.

"More municipalities continue to pass these protections at the local level, but an estimated 70 percent of Pennsylvanians still live or work in communities that do not provide these protections. The people of Pennsylvania support this commonsense change, and it's the right thing to do."

Pennsylvania's Human Relations Act currently bans discrimination based on race, color, religious creed, ancestry, age, sex, national origin, a non-job related handicap or disability, or the use of a guide or support animal due to a person being blind, deaf or having a physical handicap.

Kipona Sept. 3-5

The City of Harrisburg and The Greater Harrisburg Arts Council present Kipona Sept. 3-5. All weekend admission is $5. Children under 16 admitted free. This year's show will feature more than 150 artists from across the United States in downtown Harrisburg's Riverfront Park from Market Street to Vine Street at Shipoke. Artists will feature ongoing demonstrations. Info: www.harrisburgarts.org

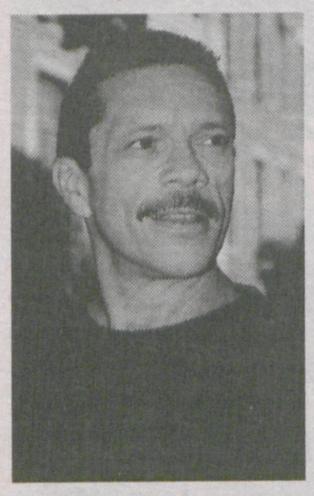
Free Hep A, Hep B, HPV Vaccination Sept. 12

Have You Been Vaccinated?

There's a free walk-in Vaccine night Mon., Sept. 12, 6-9 p.m. at Alder Health Services (formerly AIDS Community Alliance), 100 Cameron St., Suite 301-East, Harrisburg. No appointment necessary. Info: 1-800-867-1550. The HPV Vaccine is available only to men and women ages 18 to 26.

publisher's note

Is "Know Nothing' Here to Stay?



Frank Pizzoli

Woody Allen once answered the question "Is sex dirty? with "If you do it right". Same with politics.

We face another fiscal wrestling match when our newly appointed 'Super Congress' decides this Fall on cuts, caps, and curtailments in the national deficit due for completion later this year. Will the battle be as dirty as sex? You bet, if they do it right.

What will stroke the flames is a 21st century remake of the original 1840-50 "Know Nothing" political party. The name reflects what party members said when asked about their participation or the work of the semi-secret organization. "I know nothing." was the response.

Nothing secret about the US House Republicans, who this past summer opposed any resolution to lowering the nation's deficit that did not reflect everything they wanted and nothing the other side pitched. No fiscal steps that reflected another point of view were acceptable to Republicans in order to ease the current deep-seated recession throttling our economy. The New Know Nothings called for only cuts, no new revenues.

The "Know Nothing" comparison then and now is striking, at least with the not knowing anything part. Boasts by Congressional Republicans about their cost-cutting victories are not flying with economists, analysts, even some Republicans. Calling for a mix of cuts and revenue is Martin Feldstein, former advisor to Ronald Reagan, and Henry Paulson, Treasury secretary under George W. Bush. A rift is deepening between the Republican Party establishment and Tea-Party inspired Republicans in Congress. The Know Somethings are trying to rein in the Know Nothings.

Essentially, here's the rub: Experience and results show that when governments invest in their national economies, growth occurs. It's that simple. "Given the scale of the debt problem, a credible plan requires both revenue enhancement measures and entitlement reform," Bank of America's Ethan Harris recently said. He's hardly a Socialist. He likely knows that since World War II, nations around the world have, by policy, operated "mixed economies," whereby governments pump cash into their economies with the goal of creating better results than not doing so has produced. He knows how his employer makes money.

Even House majority leader Eric Cantor recognized where campaigning and ideology end and governing begins when he said "…there will be pressure to compromise on taxes". He was responding to S&P's analysis that said Congress has missed the market. Even arch capitalists on Wall Street know that government spending helps spur dwindling economies. How do you think they make money?

Enter Pat Toomey, US Senator, Pa., a member of the Super Congress team tasked with coming up with a fiscal plan. With his Wall St. experience, it will be interesting to watch what he knows, or doesn't, or is willing to admit as he participates in the process of governing.

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Central to your life.

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Melancholy Settlement Reached

In 2010, 13-year-old Jacobsen Middle School student Seth Walsh committed suicide after he was the victim of severe harassment due to his nonconformity with gender stereotypes. An investigation found that despite being notified of the harassment, the Tehachapi Unified School District in Tehachapi, CA failed to adequately investigate or respond.

Under the agreement recently announced, the school district is required to prevent and respond to gender-based harassment at its schools, and undertake district-wide efforts to eliminate the hostile environment resulting from the peer-on-peer harassment of any student.

"This settlement is a huge and melancholy victory in the on-going fight for safe, supportive schools for all students, and the first closure of any kind in the cases that rocked the nation last fall," said Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN) executive director, Eliza Byard. "My heart goes out to the Walsh family and our thoughts are with them today, as this step forward for the students of Tehachapi has come at an unimaginable cost."

As a result of this landmark ruling, the school district will revise its policies related to sexual or gender-based harassment and will provide mandatory trainings on these types of harassment for all students, teachers, administrators and staff.

The district will also form an advisory committee made up of administrators, students and parents to advise the district on sex-based harassment. Other requirements include filing compliance reports, assessing the school's harassment climate, continually monitoring for harassment and holding mandatory community and parent meetings.

"Assistant Attorney General Thomas Perez and Assistant Secretary of Education Russlynn Ali and their teams are to be commended for doing everything in their power to reach a settlement to benefit future generations of Tehachapi students," said Byard. "The Departments of Education and Justice have provided a harrowing illustration of the kind of gender-based and homophobic harassment that Seth Walsh faced every day. The settlement also represents a hugely important directive to districts regarding the comprehensive approach necessary to make sure that no other students suffer as Seth did."

Research consistently demonstrates that comprehensive policies and the presence of supportive educators in the school environment - two outcomes of the terms of the Tehachapi settlement - are critical protective factors for lgbt students.

voice box

ARE WE ALABAMA?

I've read in the New York Times that Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley recently jumped in to help Jefferson County from crushing debt and avoid what the writer said could be "the biggest municipal bankruptcy filing in United States history." The solution was to get debt relief through creation of an independent borrowing authority, whose bonds Bentley agreed to guarantee. The authority would issue new bonds to replace the impaired ones that creditors now hold. Here in our region, we saw Harrisburg's Sen. Jeff Piccola (which I understand in Italian means "small") act in a small manner by rolling out legislation to restrict the city's financial bargaining powers. What a guy! ***A reader***

E-mail your thoughts to Central VOICE posops@aol.com

Debt Ceiling: US v. Germany

With debt ceilings leaking throughout the summer in Congress, media waxed on about too much versus not enough social spending. In "US Ranks Dead Last in Overall Social Spending" written by Ray Medeiros for PoliticsUSA.com, The Organization for Economic Co-Operation And Development (OECD) ranked its 34 members. The US finishes last in social spending at 7.2% of our Gross Domestic Product. Canada spends 26%. Germany spends 21% of its GDP. Is Germany being hurt by its spending on its people? Are the German people and its economy suffering because so much is spent on social programs?

Population below 50% of median income
USA: 17% GER: 8.4%
Child Poverty Rate
USA: 22.4% GER: 10.7%
Infant mortality rate
USA: 7.8 GER: 5.4
Homicide rate
USA: 5% GER: 0.86%
Life expectancy
USA: 78.3 GER: 79.4
Unemployment rate
USA: 8.8% GER: 6.3%
Exports per capita
USA: $3,375 GER: $14,169
Industrial sector as part of GDP
USA: 21.9% GER: 26.8%
Industrial growth
USA: 3% GER: 9%

GAY POLITICOS:
How They Do It, How They Fare

By Frank Pizzoli

While hundreds from the region recently lined up to "be a millionaire," others are ears deep in learning how to get elected to public office.

How does that work if you're gay? Pretty good if you talk to candidates and political operatives who've been involved with The Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund.

Twenty years ago in a conference room in Virginia a dozen leaders gathered to explore electing open lgbt candidates. At that time, there were about 40 openly gay elected and appointed officials nationwide. Back then Elaine Noble running for office in Massachusetts required police escorts in order to campaign safely. Harvey Milk had been assassinated in San Francisco. Gay candidates regularly faced death threats, smears and broken windows.

Today there are about 600 elected and appointed gay officials in the country, including mayors, state legislators, and Congress. President Obama's current head of the Export/Import Bank, Fred Hochberg, is gay, as are Speakers of the House in Rhode Island and California. In Oregon, a bisexual is Secretary of State. In California, a transgender person was elected judge.

Sims

In Pennsylvania, attorney Brian Sims, Equality Pennsylvania board president, says his time on the Victory Fund board has been helpful to him as a policy attorney. "To be effective at changing policy, you have to have more than an esoteric argument. Being 'right' isn't enough. You also need data and analysis to back up your assertions," Sims explains. With the Fund, he says "we're able to state definitively that electing lgbt people to office has a dramatic and positive benefit on gay civil rights."

In the spirit of the Fund, Equality Pennsylvania now has a Political Action Committee so besides policy change, Sims says, "we're working to endorse and elect LGBT Pennsylvanians knowing that they will make change as well."

"We know that no state that has ever passed any type of pro-lgbt relationship recognition has done so without first having an openly LGBT member of its state legislature," Sims says. Pennsylvania is the largest state in American to have never elected an openly gay member of the General Assembly. "We're working very hard both internally with Equality Pennsylvania and with The Victory Fund to change that," Sims said.

From left, Alex Reber, Chris Dietz, and John Campbell have participated the The Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund.

Locally, Harrisburg City Controller Dan Miller, first elected to city council, tells Central Voice that when he decided to run "it was nice just knowing the Fund was there and available for advice and maybe funding." Once he began working with them he attended their campaign training seminar. "I also received some funding from supporters around the country that without the Fund would never have known about me. The Fund gave me confidence as well as tangible knowledge and support," Miller said.

Miller

Also well-known in the region's gay community is Alex Reber, 25, a member of the Fund's Campaign Board.

He is on the same page as Sims when it comes to electing gay candidates. "We're bipartisan and besides helping to elect open lgbt people we also help with fund raising," Reber said. The Fund also operates the Gay and Lesbian Leadership Institute which both Reber, and his partner, Chris Dietz, 35, himself an elected official, have attended.

Policy change and electability are linked for Reber as they are for Sims.

Reber explained that "openly gay legislators will work on all sorts of issues with other lawmakers so there's real human contact and opportunities to create a comfort level," Reber said.

Reber's partner Dietz is the elected president of the Millersburg Borough Council, a municipality about 30 miles north of Harrisburg with a population of about 2,500. "Nobody cares," Reber said, adding "In social situations, we regularly introduce each other as a partner."

Dietz knows the electoral politics drill well. He attended the Fund's "crash course" on running for office. In 2010 he paid his tuition and travel costs to jump into a three-day training that began at 8 a.m., ended at 6 p.m. and had overnight homework assignments that extended the day well past midnight.

"It brought the whole thing together for me," Dietz said. A veteran of door knocking and pamphlet passing for President Obama and a long list of candidates for state senate, judge, and coroner, he explained that "When you help with campaigns, you see only bits and pieces. It's hectic, exciting, but you rarely see how it all fits together, the different essential elements of running for office.

Elements of the training include duties of a candidate, finance manager, campaign manager, media, fund raising, volunteers, and filing documentation. "When you break it all down and then complete your 'homework' you can see how the gears mesh, where the oil is needed," Dietz said.

From the enthusiasm in Dietz's voice, he sounds like a guy who can make things run smoothly. "I really learned a lot in my six years in office. I really like the economic development work we've done as a council through investing in our ecotourism infrastructure including the Lykens Valley Rail Trail and our Riverfront Park Gateway project." Good economic development doesn't know if the person or people behind it are gay or straight. "Good policy is good policy," Dietz points out.

As far as being gay? "It hasn't mattered in any tangible way. My 'coming out,' so to speak, happened organically, naturally. As my colleagues and the community got to know me, my work, my ideas, met Alex as my partner; they haven't seemed to care a bit. It's about the contribution you make," Dietz said.

Latest to the group is John Campbell, who ran for Harrisburg City Treasurer unopposed on both tickets in the last Primary Election. He's set to take office once the formal process of holding an election takes place.

At 23, the oldest son of a single mom,

continued on page 6

Time for a Gay Cabinet Member?

By David Mixner

All over the world we have seen members of the lgbt community step up to lead their citizens into greatness. In the United States we have elected or appointed over 500 people to office. Mayor Annise Parker leads Houston which is the fourth largest city in the United States. In Iceland we have a lesbian Prime Minister, in Paris and Berlin we have two openly gay mayors, in Italy we might soon have a gay male as Prime Minister and Ireland the next president might be an openly gay man.

Former Prime Minister Gordon Brown of Great Britain appointed four openly lgbt people to his cabinet during his administration. Congressman Barney Frank served as head of the Banking Committee in the last term of Congress. The talent that the lgbt community offers this nation and the world is simply endless. It is only a matter of time, sooner than later, that we will have members of the lgbt community serve in the United States Senate and as a governor of a major state.

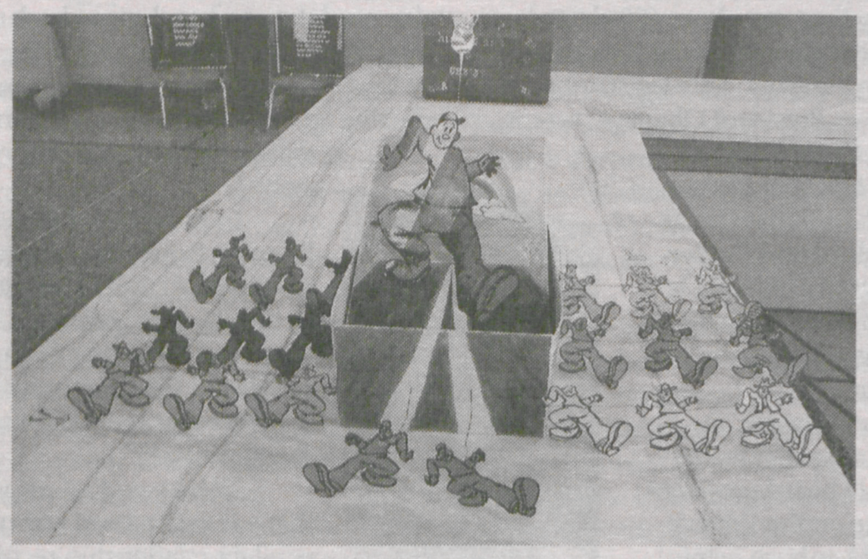
Where are we missing?

The LGBT community has never had an open member serve in the President's cabinet and our appointments as Ambassadors have been few. The time has long passed to correct these glaring omissions. After all if Catholic Italy surrounding the Vatican can have an openly gay man as Prime Minister then surely we can serve America in the cabinet.

There is no question that over the next two years several major cabinet appointments will come open. Mr. President, it is long past time to reach down into the talented and ready-to-serve lgbt community for an appointment and allow us to bring those talents to America.

Spirits United Holds 'Mini" Parade

A open and affirming congregation, St. Paul's United Church of Christ, Mechanicsburg, participated in the annual Central Pa. Pride Festival Parade for three years, receiving awards. When the church heard the popular venue had been cancelled, the group held a miniature parade. Church members were developed shoe boxes into little floats which were displayed on tables decorated with a miniature two-dimensional replica of Harrisburg's Front Street. A Grand Marshal decided the mini parade was so amazing it was impossible to select the best float. The miniature parade, a portion of which is shown here, was on display during Spirits United's July 31 service. Maybe they'll enter the floats in a future parade?



Gay Politicos: How They Do It

continued from page 5

Campbell's already accomplished on many fronts. In his dealings with HACC's Gay/Straight Allies, the student body, and now as paid executive director of Historical Harrisburg Association, his involvement has been primarily as the financial guy.

Now studying accounting at Lebanon Valley College, Campbell has been through the Fund's training ringer. He says of the training jam, "We actually role play out an entire campaign, all the relationships, the threads of where everything weaves together," he says.

All three agree that leadership is about people, policies, and what's good for the community as best that can be defined in a diverse world. "Electing gay people to office isn't first about 'identity politics,'" Campbell says. The gay community is a natural political base, but when you lead, govern, take an oath to do your best for the community, that means everyone."

Bethlehem PA Mayor Ends Legal Discrimination

In front of enthusiastic supporters, Bethlehem Mayor John Callahan signed legislation making discrimination in housing, employment, public accommodation, and education, illegal, and creating a Human Relations Commission to enforce the law.

The ordinance was introduced by Mayor Callahan and unanimously passed City Council following five public hearings and more than eight hours of public testimony.

Two members of Council attended the signing ceremony, Karen Dolan and J. William Reynolds. Reynolds stated that he "was embarrassed Bethlehem did not have this law before." Similar sentiments were shared by the more than 40 businesses in the city that publicly endorsed the ordinance, along with more than 25 faith leaders and 13 labor unions. Callahan stated, "It is high time Bethlehem is no longer the largest city in Pennsylvania to not have a human relations ordinance."

Adrian Shanker, Pennsylvania Diversity Network, who led the coalition effort to pass the ordinance, said, "Bethlehem had to do this because our legislators in Harrisburg have failed to protect us from discrimination, so we are forced to go city to city to ensure our basic civil rights. Hopefully Harrisburg will learn, as Bethlehem did, that basic civil rights are simply not a controversial issue."

Liz Bradbury, Pennsylvania Diversity Network, agreed, "hundreds of people turned out for the meetings to demonstrate the need for basic civil rights in Bethlehem. Every city needs this law, and there is no rational reason to not have it.

Twenty-one municipalities now protect the lgbt community from undue discrimination, according to Ted Martin, Equality Pennsylvania. "The honor now goes to Altoona for being the largest municipality in the state lacking a non-discrimination law. As we have seen, mayors across the state have been playing 'hot potato' trying to lose that un-esteemed honor."

The ordinance in Bethlehem was supported by a broad range of civil rights, arts, education, labor, and faith organizations, including Lehigh University, AARP, ACLU, and Lehigh Valley Labor Council.

Health Update

Gay men - higher cancer rates

A large California study was recently released and found that cancer may be nearly twice as prevalent among gay men as straight men. The study relied on self-reported data from the California Health Interview survey, the largest state survey of its kind in the United States. The survey included more than 120,000 people over three years: 2001, 2003, and 2005. A total of 3,690 men reported a cancer diagnosis as adults. Gay men were 1.9 times as likely as straight men to have been diagnosed with cancer, according to the study published in the peer-reviewed journal Cancer. There was no such difference witnessed among lesbian and straight women, but gay and bisexual families were twice as likely to say they were in fair or poor health after a cancer diagnosis compared to their heterosexual counterparts. The study author said that more research is needed to determine if gay men are actually at a higher risk of getting cancer.

HHS Reduces Premiums for Pre-Existing Conditions

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced new steps to reduce premiums and make it easier for Americans to enroll in the Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan. Premiums for the Federally-administered Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan (PCIP) will drop as much as 40 percent in 18 States, and eligibility standards will be eased in 23 States and the District of Columbia to ensure more Americans with pre-existing conditions have access to affordable health insurance. The Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan was created under the Affordable Care Act and serves as a bridge to 2014 when insurers will no longer be allowed to deny coverage to people with any pre-existing condition, like cancer, diabetes, and asthma.

Medicaid Future Includes Community

Many lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people and their families will be the new faces and beneficiaries of the Medicaid program. Because any lgbt couple with income that falls within the new nationwide eligibility standard (under 133% of the federal poverty line) may qualify for Medicaid, there will likely be a significant proportion of lgbt adults added to the Medicaid rolls in 2014. The unfortunate reality is that many lgbt individuals are living in poverty due to unemployment and underemployment as a result of discrimination that is a persistent problem for lgbt people and their families.

A 2009 study from the Williams Institute indicates that poverty rates among lgbt Americans are higher than those among the heterosexual and non-transgender population. Lesbian and bisexual women experience poverty at a rate of 24%, compared to 19% among heterosexuals, while a recent report from the Task Force and the National Center for Transgender Equality (a Coalition member) indicates that transgender individuals make $10,000 a year less than the national average, simply because of who they are. Other studies document that even among those who are employed, a significant wage gap between lesbian and gay employees and their heterosexual coworkers persists, and the number of uninsured remains high in the lgbt community in no small part because few employers extend insurance coverage to their employees' same-sex partners. Expanding access to this program will be a critical piece in closing the access disparities for our community. Info: Center for American Progress

2011 Healthcare Equality Index

The Human Rights Campaign Foundation has published the Healthcare Equality Index 2011 (HEI). This report details the results of an annual survey that measures how equitably healthcare facilities treat their lgbt patients and employees in the areas of patient non-discrimination, visitation, cultural competence training and employment non-discrimination. The HEI seeks to identify a "gold standard" of such policies to be used as models across the healthcare industry.

These organizations were identified as leaders: Callen-Lorde Community Health Center (New York), Chase Brexton Health Services (Maryland), L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center (California), Multnomah County Health Department (Oregon),UCSF Medical Center (California),and Whitman-Walker Health (Washington, DC) continue to set the "gold standard" in providing culturally competent prevention, care and treatment services in their communities.

Transgender Advocates & Veterans Affairs

The National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) led a successful effort to encourage the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to establish a policy of respectful delivery of prevention, diagnostic, care and treatment services for transgender and intersex veterans who are enrolled in the VA system or are otherwise eligible for care. The Veterans Health Administration (VHA), an operating division of the VA, issued a directive as a response to a decentralized VA health system in which the treatment that transgender veterans receive was dependent on which facility the vets approached for services. This directive represents an important clarification from the VHA and is a symbol of its commitment to provide competent, patient-centered care for all veterans. It is an important first step in addressing the needs of transgender veterans and veterans born with intersex conditions, setting an example of how providers in both the public and private sector can give all individuals appropriate healthcare. More information can be found in the fact sheet published by NCTE.

BlogWatch

Let's Make Civil Rights a Problem for Republicans

By Greg King

Reading my regular blogs I've concluded that the lgbt community has reached a very interesting point in the intersection of politics and our fight for marriage equality and civil rights in general.

We are at a point where Democrats can plausibly turn the tables on Republicans by using same-sex marriage and civil rights equality as a "wedge issue". Not like that's been done before.

If Democratic candidates simply state that equality is a no-brainer for them and that they are for full equality including marriage, they will loose no votes on the Blue State side and not enough votes in the middle to matter. They don't have the Red States anyway. Like NY Gov. Andrew Cuomo, as summarized by his advisor to The New York Times, said to gay civil rights opponent NY Archbishop Dolan: "I have to do what I have to do. But your support over all is very important to me."

Public opinion on same-sex marriage and gay civil rights in general are changing dramatically and quickly. Pa. State Rep. Dan Frankel, D, recently unveiled a statewide poll indicating sustained strong support for legislation (House Bill 300) that would protect people who live or work in Pennsylvania from discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity or expression. Pa. State Sen. Pat Browne, R, plans to introduce the legislation in the Senate.

"Support for this bill has remained constant over the past eight years, solid at roughly 70 percent. The overwhelming majority of Pennsylvanians – regardless of region or political party – support it. They know being gay or transgendered has nothing to do with a person's ability to fix a car or computer, or to show up on time and to do a good day's work," Frankel said.

The poll indicates strong support among many different types of people. For example, a majority of "self-described" conservatives (60%), liberals (80%) and moderates (75%) supported the bill, as did a majority of both males and females (at 69%); a majority of Republicans (61%), Democrats (74%) and Independents (74%); and a majority 18-44 year olds (73%), voters 45-59 yrs. olds (66%) and 60+ yrs. (67%).

"The poll results show not only the basic fairness of Pennsylvanians, but their consistency as well," remarked Equality Pennsylvania Board President Brian Sims.

Having stating an unequivocal position, Democratic candidates can then focus on fiscal issues that concern 100% of the population. Their focus on fiscal issues will surely gain them many more votes from the middle regardless of their stand on lgbt rights.

People in the middle of the political spectrum are not usually single issue voters. Take abortion for example. Those who are hard-line Pro-Life simply could not vote for a Pro-Choice candidate even the name on the ballot was Ronald Reagan Reincarnate. Of course, there are equally hard-line Pro-Choice folks out there. But, as polls have shown, Pro-Choice individuals have voted for candidates that they largely agree with but who also holds an opposing view on abortion. Surely, this is the same for all social issues, including lgbt equality.

So, let's have some fun. Faced with a Democratic candidate that is pro-lgbt rights, social conservatives will force their Republican candidates to talk about social issues and reaffirm their bigotry at every turn. Not only does this expose them as bigots, it also makes clear that they do not recognize or understand the current national priorities of economy, jobs and deficit. The LA Times has recently statistically analyzed the currently sitting 112th Congress as the least productive in recent years, based on votes taken, bills made into law and nominees approved. The Republican Majority is content to propose banning Sharia Law rather than writing a jobs bill.

The time has come to force Republicans to talk about their bigotry against their will. Example: Presidential candidate Michelle Bachman's co-owned Christian counseling service and videotapes by Truth Wins Out catching her husband in a lie about use of reparative therapy.

The Bonus is that National Organization for Marriage and Focus on the Family, and other anti-gay groups, would have to spread their bigotry-supporting, rights-opposing PAC money so thin, it would have no effect.

Greg King is an avid reader and blog watcher. He and partner Charles (Oswald) King were married in Connecticut, DATE.

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13 US Senators Make "Better" Video

Thirteen US Senators have made an "It Gets Better" video on the theme of lgbt harassment.

The video highlights Senators' experiences with bullying and difference and declares their dedication to passing policies that will improve life for lgbt youth. "We are working every day to make sure it gets better," said Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) in the video. Other Senators featured in the clip include Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio), Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.), Chris Coons (D-Del.), Dick Durbin (D-Ill.), Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), Al Franken (D-Minn.), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.), Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.), Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.), Mark Udall (D-Colo.), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.), and Ron Wyden (D-Ore.).

"We applaud these senators for sending a positive message about their commitment to LGBT young people. These Senators are among those leading the fight to address rampant bullying and ensure safe schools for all. Congress is currently considering two bills to make schools safer for all young people, and we hope other Senators follow the lead and push for these bills to become law," said GLSEN Executive Director Eliza Byard.

Two bills currently introduced in Congress ensure safe learning environments for all students regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity and as known as the Safe Schools Improvement Act and the Student Non-Discrimination Act .

The Safe Schools Improvement Act (SSIA) was introduced with bipartisan support on March 8, 2011 by Sen. Bob Casey (D-Penn.) and Sen. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) and currently has 28 cosponsors. A house version was introduced in April and currently has 91 bipartisan cosponsors. SSIA would require schools to implement comprehensive anti-bullying policies that include enumerated characteristics of students most often targeted, such as race, religion, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity.

The Student Non-Discrimination Act was introduced by Rep. Jared Polis (D-Colo.) in the House and Sen. Al Franken (D-Minn.) in the Senate on March 10, 2011. The Student Non-Discrimination Act would make discrimination in schools based on sexual orientation or gender identity against the law. It seeks to prevent the exclusion of students from full participation in school sanctioned events, and includes an exemption for religious schools.

See videos at thecentralvoice.ning.com

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coming out column

Queeries: STDs & New Partner

By Steven Petrow

"Talking about HIV and other STDs with a new partner"

Q: I've gotten pretty confused about when to talk with new partners or boyfriends about STDs and HIV status. Some of my friends say that as long as you're having safer sex, there's no need to have "the talk." Others say—vehemently, I might add—that I must have that conversation. What do you think? By the way I'm HIV-positive.

A: All of us who are sexually active need to be responsible for considering the risks of spreading STDs and for taking steps to protect our partners and ourselves. Whether positive or negative (or, unknowing), we owe it to everyone involved to talk about our sexual health before having sex. I've long said that if you're intimate enough to have sex with someone, you're intimate enough to talk about HIV status.

It's usually easier to do this before you find yourself in the heat of the moment, where folks sometimes get carried away by the throes of passion and take risks they might not otherwise. "The talk" needn't be involved or lengthy—although, admittedly, it can be hard to make this particular topic romantic. Be truthful and direct, saying, for instance: "I just want you to know that as far as I know, I'm [fill in the blank]. What about you?" Sometimes it's easier if you volunteer your health status first, as a way to open the door. If humor comes to you naturally, by all means try that; but remember, you're not giving a public health lecture.

Since you mentioned that you're HIV-positive, let me give you some more advice to chew on. Even if you've hinted at your seropositive status, don't assume your partner knows. The subtle signals of human interaction—especially sex-charged interaction—are easily misinterpreted. By the way, even if you discover that both of you are poz, you'll still want to talk about other potential bugs on board (Hepatitis B/C, gonorrhea, etc.) to avoid any co-infections.

Similarly, it's smart for HIV-negative people to tell their partners that information, too. This may well help a poz partner disclose his status or help both of you gauge where you'll play on the safer-sex spectrum. Or, the HIV-positive fellow may decide to pass on having sex, having previously decided not to date or have sex with HIV-negative guys (and vice versa).

"When a daughter changes her gender, does she become a son?"

Q: A friend's daughter now says she's transgender and had surgery to remove her breasts last week. I guess I should have written my friend's "son." Anyway, "he" seems thrilled with his results, but he is still a girl where it counts, so it is very confusing.

A: With all the news about Chaz Bono being transgender, your question provides a timely reminder of how complex the topic of gender identity can be. As for your friend's offspring, yes, he is indeed her son; no need for quotation marks around the word. One of the basic concepts of gender identity is that you are the gender you think and say you are. The external genitalia that make a doctor proclaim, "It's a girl!" in the delivery room are not the sum total of that individual's gender identity. Chaz summed it up perfectly by saying recently that gender identity is "between your ears, not between your legs."

Someone who makes the decision to transition from one gender to another is choosing to live as the gender that feels right to that person. For some that may simply mean changing their name and the way they dress; for others, it means taking hormones that produce physical characteristics that feel right. Others have sex-reassignment surgery, and, as you note, there are "upper" and "lower" elements to that. Most transgender people go through years of therapy and counseling as they try to determine which options are best for them, and they may take different transitional steps as time goes by. But when it comes to figuring out what to call your friend's son, the truth is that all this matters little. Wherever your friend's son falls along the continuum of transition, since he now calls himself a) man, he is a man.

The important thing to remember is that individuals who are transitioning can experience tremendous pain and confusion. By some estimates, 20 to 30 percent of transgender people have attempted or committed suicide. The support of those who love them can mean the world to them; it can, in fact, literally be the difference between life and death.

"All about my new book"

Thanks to so many of you for sending in your "Queeries" over the past couple of years. Now you'll find them, plus hundreds of other questions in my new book, Steven Petrow's Complete Gay & Lesbian Manners. The book, really a guide to your best LGBT life, covers it all – from coming out to making friends, dating and sex etiquette, long term relationships and same-sex ceremonies, not to mention, raising our kids, entertaining, dealing with homophobia, and much more. Please check it out.

Steven Petrow is the author of Steven Petrow's Complete Gay & Lesbian Manners: The Definitive Guide to LGBT Life and can be found online at www.gaymanners.com.

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For more information on The LGBT Center or to become a sponsor or advertiser of FAB2011, please email info@centralpalgbtcenter.org or call 717-920-9534.

LGBT Community Center Coalition of Central PA | 221 N. Front Street, 3rd Floor | Harrisburg, PA 17101 | 717-920-9534 | www.centralpalgbtcenter.org

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Gay Rodeo Full of Buck!

Occasional Central Voice writer Chris Tittel sends readers photos from Calgary's Canadian Rockies International Rodeo 2011, known as a gay rodeo with beautiful daytime weather and near-freezing nightly temperatures. This week is also Stampede, the giant rodeo on which Calgary has built its worldwide reputation. The last photo is of the "Riderless Horse," walked around at the event's opening to remember a loved one lost during the past year. Pierre lost his partner. Sandy lost her dad. "I was particularly glad to see the AIDS ribbon dangling from beneath the saddle, next to the hat hanging off the side and the boots reversed in the stirrups. A cowboy prayer noting support for the HIV/AIDS community was read while they walked the horse around the field," Tittel reports.

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Food Not Bombs Continues

Americans toss out 40% of all food, says the Food Not Bombs web site. Celebrating its 30th anniversary last year, the internationally recognized organization maintains a revived Harrisburg chapter. Volunteers feed as many as 60 people in Harrisburg's Market Square Monday evenings.

Photo by Central Voice

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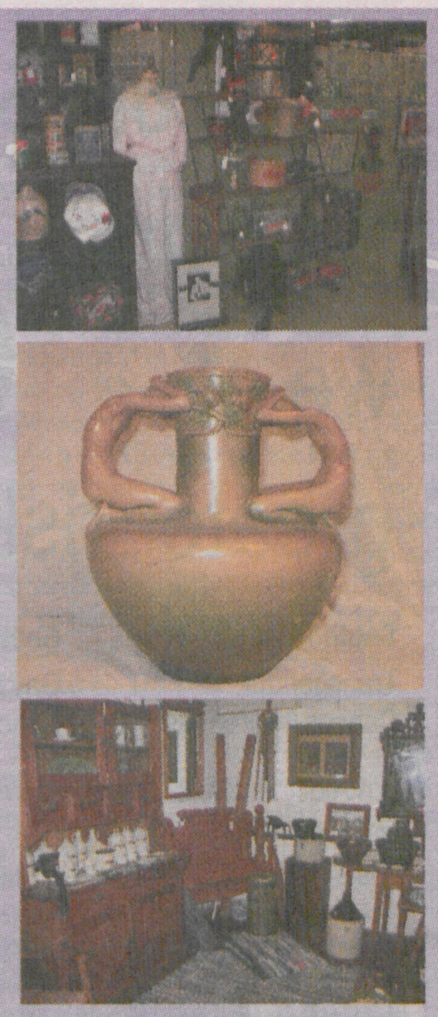

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23rd Annual Harrisburg Gallery Walk Sept. 11

Twenty-two exhibition sites will welcome visitors, free of charge, Sun., Sept. 11, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. for the 23rd Annual Harrisburg Gallery Walk. A map, gallery list, and locations is available at www.artassocofhbg.com.

The event is presented by The Art Association of Harrisburg and sponsored by The Patriot News and WXPN.

Although gallery walkers may begin the trek at any site on the map, here's a suggested route from the AAH: Visit the Art Association of Harrisburg, 21 N. Front St. first, where the huge Fall Membership Exhibition "Red Hot" will be on view, complemented by music by the Andy Mowatt Trio, an awards ceremony at noon, and light refreshments.

Then stroll south on Front St. to the John Harris/Simon Cameron Mansion to view a contemporary exhibition depicting Dauphin County on the eve of the Civil War. Head north on Front St. to McKissick Associates Architects' historic townhouse, where various works by New York artists will reflect the 10-year anniversary of 911. Back on Market Square, stop in at Penn National Insurance to enjoy the oil plein air landscapes of Susan Benigni-Landis.

Whitaker Centre for Science and the Arts on Market St. is next, where a retrospective of the works of the popular artist Earl Blust will be showcased. Next door in Strawberry Square, check out the Third Annual CASA Alumni Art Show before heading south on Third St. to the Salem United Church of Christ, where the Mechanicsburg Art Centre School & Galleries artists will be exhibiting and demonstrating.

At the Gallery at Walnut Place, 413 Walnut St., a mysterious exhibition is promised that "will turn you upside down"! At Gallery@Second, next to Firehouse Restaurant, you will enjoy paintings by David Bottini and Maaike Heitkonig. At Pine Street Presbyterian Church, mixed media artist Thom Kulp will display his vibrant works. Then, hike to Mangia Qui & Suba, 272 North St., where you may not only delight in the expressionist female figurative paintings by Joanne Landis, but also enjoy a light lunch.

The State Museum of Pennsylvania will not only present The 2011 Art of the State Exhibition, but also a special showing by DOSHI Gallery called "Latent Images." Susuquehanna Art Museum's VanGo! Museum on Wheels will also be on hand in the Museum's North St. bus zone. Then, walk north on Third St. to the Hodgepodgery, with its boutique of hand-made wares by local artisans, and then to the Midtown Arts Centre next door. Midtown Scholar Bookstore is next, with Mantis Collective Gallery in the adjoining property. HACC's Contemporary Crafts Marketing Program at Reily and N. Third St. will offer creations of all kinds by students.

New this year is Four Winds Gallery at 1430 N. Second St., just off Reily, where owner Re DeSabres will display her ceramics along with works by Martin Plaut, Christine Goldbeck, Sherryl Heberlig and Mandy Deardoff. You may want to hop into your car to get to The Governor's Residence at 2035 N.Front, where selected works by Ron Donoughe and Patrick Ruane will be shown, and artists will be painting in the lovely gardens. You really MUST drive to the last site on the Walk… Mitrani at Home, 3535 Walnut St. (Route 22), where you will be entranced by treasures from the Middle East and beyond, as well as artwork by varied artists.

Info: ww.artassociationofhbg.com; 717-236-1432

Health Care Reform Boosts Data

United States Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Kathleen Sebelius recently announced that sexual orientation measures will be included in the federal government's National Health Indicators (NHIS) Survey in 2013. Gender identity measures are being tested for addition when ready.

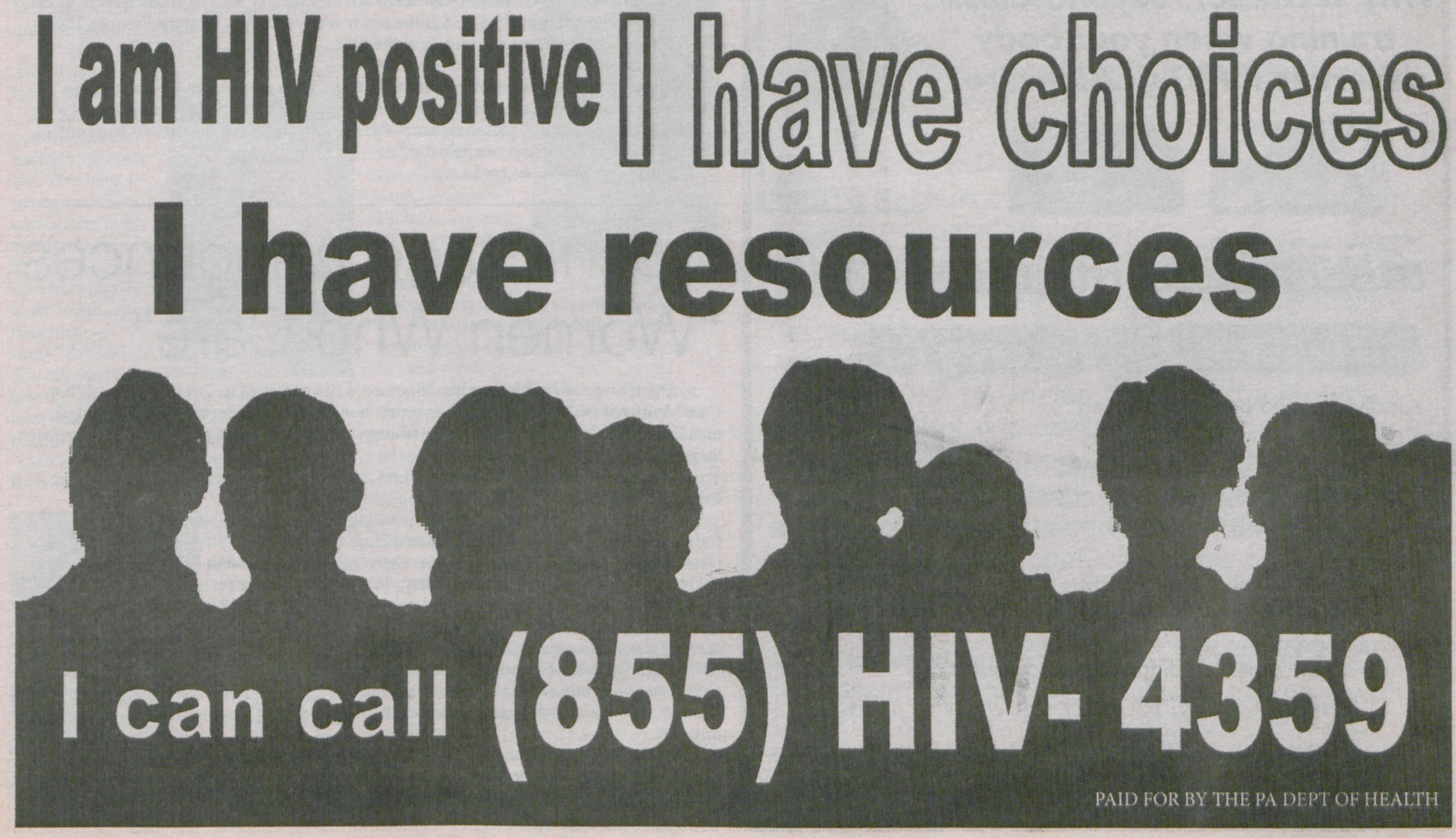
The survey is the major tool that the HHS uses to keep tabs on the health of the nation.

"Hopefully this will serve as an example for other government departments and branches as they begin to recognize the unique characteristics and needs of the individuals and families who make up the American lgbt community," said Dr. Stephen L. Boswell, Fenway Health CEO.

Staff from the Fenway Institute worked with HHS staff to craft the new data collection policy.

"These new guidelines will allow the federal government to collect some of the data we need to better understand lgbt health needs and create programs and advocate for resources to address them." said Dr. Kenneth Mayer, Fenway Institute. "The lack of data in this area is a serious impediment to lgbt health programming development and implementation."

American Lung Association, National Coalition for LGBT Health and National Gay and Lesbian Task Force applauded the inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity in the survey.



Couple Files Non-Discrimination Claim

Mark Reed-Walkup and Dante Walkup, a Dallas area same-sex couple, have announced filing a non-discrimination claim against the Dallas Morning News for the newspaper's refusal to run their wedding announcement.

The couple, married December 10, 2010 in a ceremony at the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, DC, placed and paid for a wedding announcement in the publication.

The couple filed a complaint on December 27, with the city of Dallas' Fair Housing Office due to the newspaper's violation of Chapter 46 "Unlawful Discriminatory Practices Relating to Sexual Orientation," which prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation in housing, employment and public accommodations.
According to James Donovan in the Brooklyn Law Review, "If a newspaper is a public accommodation, then its refusal to grant access to the society pages to gay men and lesbians for the purpose of announcing their unions, likely would violate the nondiscrimination ordinance. Withholding that service would deny privileges available from the newspaper, such as appearance in the society pages, based on the prohibited criterion of sexual orientation."

On May 8, 2002, the Dallas City Council adopted Chapter 46, "Unlawful Discriminatory Practices Relating to Sexual Orientation." Chapter 46 prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation in housing, employment and public accommodations. This ordinance became effective on October 1, 2002. The full Chapter 46 ordinance reads:

"It is the policy of the city of Dallas to bring about through fair, orderly, and lawful procedures the opportunity for every person to obtain employment, access to all places of public accommodation, and housing, without regard to sexual orientation. This policy is based upon recognition of the rights of every individual to work and earn wages through gainful employment, to obtain and enjoy goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, and accommodations in all places of public accommodation, and to obtain housing. The denial or deprivation of these rights because of sexual orientation is detrimental to the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Dallas and is within the power and responsibility of the city to prevent."

Reed-Walkup said, "We strongly believe paid wedding announcements constitute a public accommodation and segregating our announcement to the 'commitment' section is treating our legal marriage as 'less than' other married couples. It is blatant discrimination, as well as false advertising. We had a legal wedding and not a commitment ceremony."

In addition to filing the complaint with the Dallas' Fair Housing Office, Change.org created an online petition asking the Dallas Morning News to honor their request and payment, since they had been legally married in another jurisdiction. The petition now has over 9,000 signatures from across the country.

Chamber on the move

CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA GAY AND LESBIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

By Bill Krenz

Social Marketing

The chamber conducted its second educational program of the year Aug. 11 entitled "The Why and How of Social Media". The program was held in conjunction with the networking mixer hosted by York member Robert Godfrey, Jr, owner, MyCommunity Tickets.com.

Sales trainer and social media consultant, Deb Bixler, spoke to the group with recommendations on how to advance your business with regard to social media and reviewed techniques on the basics of online networking. Bixler explained that social media is more than just Facebook or Twitter. Effective utilization of the Internet is another key component.

Retreat

Chamber members held their first ever board 'retreat' in July. President Russ Boggs called the board together in order to objectively review the current progress of the chamber's growth in the region and to determine strategic next steps to consider.

Pride

The chamber participated in and was one of many sponsors of the Pride Festival of Central Pennsylvania held July 30 at River Front Park, Harrisburg. The chamber was staffed a booth, promoted its community activities. The chamber is pleased to also have participated in York's first Pride event Aug. 13.

Sept. Mixer

The September Mixer on Sept. 13 was held in the offices of Alder Health Services, Harrisburg. Formerly known as AIDS Community Alliance, Alder Health Services is broadening its health-related services to the lgbt community, primarily in the form of a primary car health practice. The facility is impressive and exemplifies the continued growth and expansion this organization has marshaled the last few years.

Future Events

The October Mixer on Oct. 18 is slated for the First Reformed United Church of Christ, Lancaster from 6-8 p.m. The November Mixer is a grand opening of a Members 1st Federal Credit Union. Final details are pending.

5th Anniversary

Jan. 21, 2012, the chamber celebrates a 5th anniversary with its Annual Meeting & Dinner. The celebration will be held at the newly renovated Best Western Premier The Central Hotel & Conference Center. Save the date.

Volunteers

The chamber continues to look for volunteers from the business community to participate in our various committee meetings. If you are thinking of joining an lgbt professional organization, please visit our web site and check out the various committees. Contact the chamber if you can help out.

Updates & Info: www.cpglcc.org

Open Stage Announces "Women Who Care"

Open Stage of Harrisburg has announced the names of its 2011 "Women Who Care." Initiated in 2000, the WWC program honors women who have demonstrated unselfish devotion to the Greater Harrisburg community and to the arts, including Open Stage.

The 2011 Open Stage "Women Who Care" are: Mary Simmonds, Jewel Cooper, Beverlee Lehr, and Anne Yellott.

Dr. Mary Simmonds practices hematology, oncology and internal medicine in Camp Hill, PA. Dr. Simmonds graduated from the Medical College of PA, and served a residency at Geisinger Medical Center. She is actively involved in the community, especially with the American Cancer Society. Her award will be presented Friday, June 3.

Jewel Cooper's award will be presented June 10. Ms Cooper, a senior executive at Graystone Bank, was also past president of the Rotary Club of Harrisburg. She is actively involved in many volunteer and leadership initiatives in the community.

Beverlee Lehr is a visual artist specializing in ceramic sculpture. She is the recipient of numerous awards for her work, and has shown extensively throughout the country. She is also a practicing massage therapist. She will receive her award on Friday, June 17.

Anne Yellott will he honored on Friday, June 24. Another active community member, her affiliations include the Bach Choir of Bethlehem, St. Stephen's Episcopal Cathedral in Harrisburg, and the PA Heritage Society.

Info: openstagehbg.com

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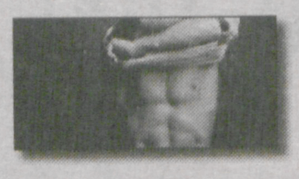

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Youth Group *The CURVE* 5 Years Old

By Frank Pizzoli

The CURVE was inspired in 2006 by a York College student who attended a teen lgbtq program in Bucks County. "There was little similar support in the York area, so we did needs assessment," remembers Debra Gable, education director, Planned Parenthood of Central Pa.

Five years old, the group serves York area youth 14- 21 by providing a biweekly safe and supportive environment for educational, advocacy and recreational activities.

Debra Gable

Youth program coordinator Erica Rich shares a story about one youth who didn't want to get out of mom's car when they arrived. From Rich's dairy: Mom tells me I'll have fun, but I doubt it. She thinks coming will help me, but I already feel like a freak. Why do I want to go to a special group for outcasts? What if someone sees me? They will know I am going to this group for gay kids.

By the teen's second attendance, Rich's dairy records: Mom asks if her son wants her to wait again. He says he's fine. Just be back at 9. By then, he'd watched a short film about a guy who's not sure about whether to come out at school. He loves how everyone's being open and relieved that he's not the only one dealing with this stuff.

"That's the whole point, young people need a place to feel safe. They're not alone," Gable said.

Erica Rich

Safe is what youth coordinator Rich says they feel. "We have a young man who comes here in his Sunday best, but he likes to jazz it up with some lip gloss and maybe dangling earrings," she said. The safe space allows for youth, at least temporarily, to explore gender norms outside of the larger expectations of society. "Unconditional acceptance is what it is," Rich said.

Michael Bechtel

An original member of the group, Michael Bechtel, 22, continues his involvement even though he's aged out. "I want to be part of the group that helped me understand I'm no different than anyone else." He handed out materials at this year's Pride.

For volunteer Sabrina the experience has been twofold. She came out about two years ago as bisexual. "I wanted to be linked to a community," she said. Professionally, Sabrina wants to bring mental health issues into sharper focus within the lgbtq community and hopes someday to work directly with youth experiencing such challenges.

Sabrina

Energetic and well-spoken Andrew, 22, about to begin a student teaching placement, is anxious to bring a message of "safety for all students" to the school setting. Upon reflection he realizes that the program offered him a place to process feelings and experiences. "It was a big load off my shoulders, to have a place that understood," he said.

Andrew

School psychologist for nine years, Heather has come to appreciate the connections that can be made among youth who attend programs, parents, teachers and administrators. "It all has to work together - students, parents, classroom teachers, administrators," she said. Cooperation among such stakeholders has lead to the successful development of school-based support programs like gay/straight alliances.

Heather

Andrew and Heather point out that although many people under the age of 30, as surveys consistently indicate, are not caught up in sexual identity issues and seem comfortable with diversity, "somebody must be doing the bullying," they point out. Rich says that although some youth are accepting that may not help with parents or a church that views same-sex relationships are morally wrong.

A 16-year-old young man said he is afraid to come out at school so he generally keeps his life in compartments. "I'm afraid of harassment," he said shyly. Heather relates how survey data says that school kids would rather be beaten up than called a "fag". A recent report finds that violence against lgbt individuals for 2010 was 23% higher than in 2009. (See "Anti-gay Violence Up Reports Shows" page XX). Gable points out "more acceptance sits alongside students, others, who need to act on the fact they don't like or accept gay peers."

Smiling, Andrew said, "Change is hard for us all, but programs like CURVE help create leaders to lead change."

CURVE Benefit Sept. 18, film "La Mission," with Benjamin Bratt. Info: 845.9683 x 213 or betsy.buckingham@ppfa.

CURVE at a Glance

Youth served, unduplicated
2007, 22
2008, 31
2009, 20
2010, 42
2011, 12, to date
Measured results:
75% increase in survey response "I feel good about myself."
46% increase in response "I can talk to my parents/guardians about my sexuality issues."

What participants say

"I have learned to better my life."
"I feel more connected to the gay community."
"I have found a place where I am completely comfortable with who I am."
"I think I've met people I could become friends with."
"I've got more confidence."
"I had fun with people without worrying about my sexuality."
"I found a local group of people to connect with."
"I will learn to love who I am."

What CURVE Does

LGBTQ Resources: history, advocacy, coming out support, sexual identity issues

Sexual Health: World AIDS Day, National Condom Week, Reproductive Anatomy, Get Yourself Tested, safer sex practices, sexual con games
Mental & Emotional Health: stress, depression, body image & the media, It Gets Better Project, drug & alcohol awareness

Life: disaster preparedness, career/workplace, queer on campus, bias, Internet safety, relationships, living with HIV, gender transition, recycled craft projects, yoga, cooking healthy, movie nights

CURVE Reaches Out

Conference attendance, Pride events, HACC Allies, Leadership for Diverse Schools Program with Leadership York, diversity workshops, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity workshops for 60 professionals, YWCA/York training

Ally in the Academy

By Trum Simmons

What's Love Got to Do with It?

Fall brings the start to another academic year and more opportunities to think hard about social justice for the lgbtq communities in our region and across the country. By think hard, I mean thinking below the surface—the kind that leads to what some call deep learning.

The legalization of same-sex marriage in New York over the summer brought yet more discussion about civil and human rights, but not much of it was very deep. (Well, much of it was deep, as in bullshit deep, but that's not what I'm talking about here.)

Yes, this period of social change is complex and confusing. The media tend to oversimplify everything by focusing too much on here's what advocates say and here's what opponents say.

It's hard to think—it takes a lot of intellectual effort. And as same-sex marriage becomes more common, more questions will be raised about what it means for our society and how to keep the movement going. There will be many more battles ahead.

As author Scott Peck says, life is hard. We face all sorts of problems as we go through life, and it takes hard work to solve them. Peck's book "The Road Less Traveled" gives the reader lots of suggestions about how to do all the hard work, beginning with the fact that instead of stewing about our problems we need to act. The way to solve our problems involves loving action, and love takes an immense amount of work.

Loving action includes hard thinking. The more we understand the complexities of the issues we face, the better we will be able to understand and eventually solve them. The more we understand our brothers and sisters, especially those who disagree with us, the better our chance of success in our struggle for social justice.

As we enter the fall we face other challenges besides advocating for marriage. The regional community needs to think hard about how best to support efforts like the annual Pride Festival of Central PA and the Fall Achievement Benefit (FAB), as well as the ongoing year-round work of organizations like the LGBT Center Coalition, all of which face enormous challenges.

Without going into specifics, let's just say that there is not enough strong support from enough strong people to keep these efforts on an even keel. And when we spend our energy fighting among ourselves, it's a wonder that we can accomplish the things we do.

Yes, advocating for social justice is hard work, and yes, we will disagree with each other. We will lose some battles. An acquaintance who worked in the area of environmental justice was known for this observation: "We are here to fight losing battles. Do not be distracted by an occasional victory." He was using humor to make an important point—ours is a tough haul, a long slog, and we will lose often. But it doesn't mean we should quit.

I'm particularly concerned about the LGBT Center Coalition and the need for more of us to support it more consistently. It took years of meetings and discussions to get the center going. I can remember sitting in early discussions of what form it would take and how to get it off the ground. The good news is that it finally happened, and the center is a reality.

At the same time, the center has a lot on its plate and has suffered from the typical stresses that all nonprofits face. (As my wife Michelle serves on the board of directors, I am acutely aware of them.) It has routinely experienced the Six Phases of a Project. For those of you who haven't heard this truism, here it is for your edification:

1. Enthusiasm
2. Disillusionment
3. Panic
4. Search for the guilty
5. Punishment of the innocent
6. Praise and honors for the nonparticipants

This fall, I'd like to see us all roll up our sleeves and do the hard work necessary to move forward. Let's all engage in loving action while exercising a sense of humor along the way. And when you feel as though everything is just too hard and complex, take some time to step back and do a bit of hard thinking. This will perhaps lead to some deep learning, followed by that much-needed loving action.

Trum Simmons is senior professor of English at Harrisburg Area Community College (HACC) and adviser of The Fourth Estate, the Harrisburg campus student newspaper. He also advises HACC Allies, the LGBTQA student organization.

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March On Movie *– As the official kickoff event of Pride Festival of Central Pennsylvania, Equality Pennsylvania sponsored a special screening of the film "March On." The film tells the story of five couples against the backdrop of the historic Oct. 11, 2009 Equality March on Washington. From left, Ted Martin, Equality Pennsylvania executive director, Robert Voorheis, chief advocate, Marriage Equality New York, his husband Michael Sabatino, and Pride president Justin Bacon. Stallions Entertainment Complex saved the evening by graciously opening its doors upon discovery the original host venue had double booked their facility.* *Photo by Central Voice*

MCC column

New Beginnings

By Rev. Lori Rivera, Pastor
MCC of the Spirit

I am new to the central Pennsylvania area. My partner of 26 years, Darlene, and I moved to Harrisburg in mid-February from central west Florida. We lived not far from the gulf coast beaches and the weather is steady for at least 10 months of the year – hot and muggy. From December to mid-February you might occasionally have to put on a sweater and on a rare occasion put on the heater instead of the air conditioning. Folks here at MCC of the Spirit in Harrisburg keep telling me that spring is just around the corner. But I should be prepared since one never knows about the weather toward the end of March in the region.

Spring is a time of year that is full of signs of new beginnings; flowers budding, birds chirping, grass turning green and the celebration of Easter. New beginning can be wonderful opportunities in our lives. These opportunities can lead to growth and/or opportunities to change what we don't like about ourselves or add something to our lives that's needed like exercise, new hobbies or being true to ourselves.

As lgbt people our lives are filled with new beginnings. Every time we come out to someone, whether they are a new acquaintance or an old friend or family member, it is a new beginning. We ask ourselves do I really want to do this. We wonder how they will react. We are even fearful. And unfortunately their reaction will more than likely determine the future of that relationship. When their reaction is negative, there's a good chance that the relationship will end. When the reaction is positive we are happy but there is still a change to the relationship. This change causes a new beginning to the relationship since there is a dynamic that wasn't present before.

We should rejoice every time we have opportunities through new beginnings. We should rejoice when we come out to others and be proud of who we are. We should celebrate every time a transgendered person experiences a new beginning as they boldly walk out of their home letting the world see that the outside person represents that which they know is their inner person.

Let's celebrate new beginnings in our lives. Let one of our new beginnings be to let our communities, both the lgbt and our communities of residence, know of our Pride. Pride in the people we are, pride in the person we are now and will be in the future and pride in our accomplishments. As a person of faith I say let's show our pride as a lgbt person of faith. This might be a new beginning for some - to reconcile the person one is with one's faith. Take a step in your new beginnings to find a house of worship or faith community and join with others to celebrate new beginnings. For each day is a new beginning with God.

Gen Silent Film about Aging

As the Baby Boomer Generation ages so its lgbt members. They face the same challenges as other aging populations – and then some. To shed light on the situation, Gen Silent, the new LGBT documentary film by filmmaker Stu Maddux, comes to the region in October.

The film will be shown Oct. 13 at Penn State Harrisburg, Oct. 16 at HACC York. Millersville University will show the film at a date TBA in their downtown Lancaster performance space. The film illustrates the challenges and brings us hope around lgbt aging issue.

The film is brought to the area by the LGBT Center's CPLAN - Central Pa. LGBT Aging Network – their newly established committee on aging and puts a face on discrimination in long term care facilities faced by gay people. The film gives viewers an intimate view of the day-to-day lives of six lgbt seniors in Boston over a year. Some are forced to go back in the closet within their aging community. Some die prematurely because they can't ask for help and have too few people to help them. There are almost 38 million lgbt Americans over 65 and 50 % live alone and don't have family connections to help them.

Reports indicate 50% of nursing home workers said that their fellow workers would be intolerant of lgbt people. Advocates, such as CPLAN, have developed cultural competency programs to improve service to elders, but there is no funding or mandate by state and federal agencies to train caregivers. Transgender elders reported 19 percent were refused care, 28 per cent were subject to harassment in medical settings and 50 per cent said their providers lacked the knowledge to treat them.

Gen Silent is personal and discovers how oppression in the years before Stonewall leaves many of our elders afraid and isolated. This film shows all of us what will be in store for us unless we work with the small but growing group of impassioned professionals trying to wake up the long-term and healthcare industries to the plight of lgbt elders today.

Watch a clip of the movie at http://GenSilent.com. Join us at one of the showings. For screening times and details, check http://www.centralpalgbtcenter.org.

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A Huge THANK YOU!!!!!!!!!

Wow, I cannot believe that our 20th Anniversary Festival is already over with. It seems just like yesterday that we had formed our new board and were starting the planning stages. All year long we have planned and planned and it's gone with in a few hours. But the main thing is that it was all worth it.

First I want to thank our Sponsors; Highmark Blue Shield, PNC Bank, Palmyra UPS Store, Hershey Company, Hershey Entertainment and Resorts, PAWS, Unitarian Church of Harrisburg, Liquid 891, Crown Plaza, Central Voice, Central PA Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, Hilton Harrisburg, Baltimore OutLoud, Holtgate Podiatry, Pa Dutch Hotels, Adler Health Services, PA Dutch Hotels, Best Western Premier the Central Hotel & Conference Center, Premier Limousine, Best Western Airport & Suites, Colonial Park Family Practice, Patriot News, Market Square Presbyterian Church, Comcast, Waste Management, McCafferty Ford, Midtown Scholar, Ice Cream Heaven, CC's Bar, Altlands Ranch, Rumors, & St. Pauls UCC. Without all of you our festival would not of been possible.

Next I have to thank our tireless group of Volunteers who helped over the 4 days to set up, staff, and tear down the various stages of the Festival. This year our volunteers were instrumental throughout those 4 days and we can not thank you enough for all the hard work you did. You made the job of the Board of Directors so much easier and seem effortless.

I also have to say thank you to the various performers and special guests we had from the Reading HS Dance Team , Tom Goss, Mountain Road, M80's, Darkes, Nathan Manske from Imfromdriftwood.com, Michael Sabatoria & Robert Voorheis from March On and our MC DeMarcio for keeping us entertained all weekend long. Of course I cannot forget the band of Drag Kings and Queens whose tireless fundraising efforts all year long were there as well entertaining the crowd. Special thanks to our current 2011 Mr. Pride Donovan Hegreat & Ms. Pride Aurora Fontaine for Fantastic performances all weekend long. Of Course I would be remised if I did not mention all the attendees. It is because of you and fellow members of the community that we put this festival on. Without you, there would be no festival.

Last but certainly not least, I cannot thank my fellow Board of Directors, Brad Martin, Adam Hagerty, Tammy Cassel, Diana Kuhns, Bill Sprout, Todd Shellenberger, & Jamie Frew, for all their hard and selfless work this year. We had a lot of tough decisions to make throughout the year and we all worked together and got the job done. I had several attendees, sponsors, and vendors who commented on how nice the festival was and that definitely was a testament to all of you. Here's to planning 2012 and our 21st Anniversary.

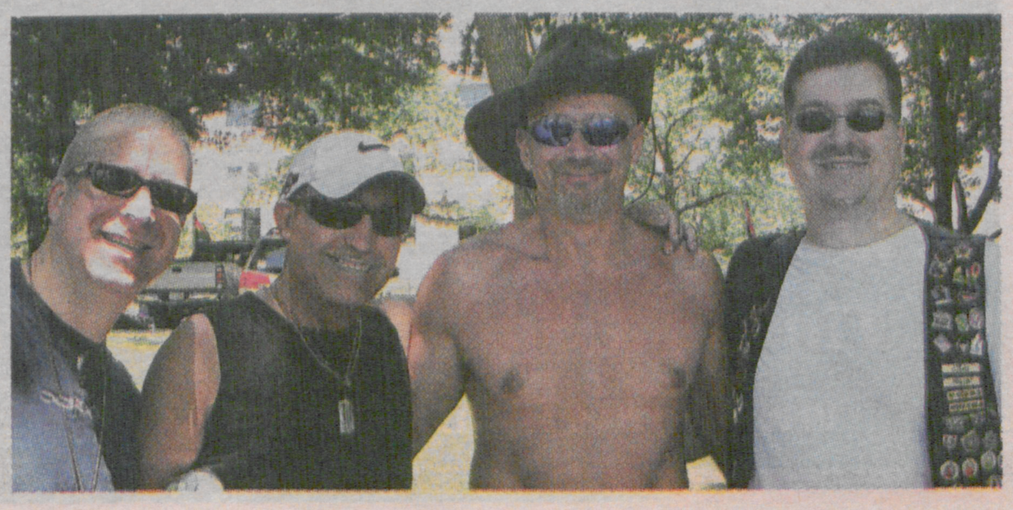
We are sill calculating all the totals for the weekend and will have that out at a later date. It looks like our numbers may be around the same as last year.

If anyone is interested in joining the board or sitting on a committee, please contact us. We are always looking for new people to bring new ideas every year.

With Pride,
Justin C Bacon, President
Pride Festival of Central PA

PRIDE FESTIVAL OF CENTRAL PA

... Pride Festival of Central PA



Brian Sanders *Photo by NealSantos*

Brian Sander *Photo by Suzi Nash*

Top 10 Picks for Sept.'s Philadelphia Fringe Festival

By Debra Miller
Philadelphia Arts and Culture Correspondent

The Philadelphia Fringe has grown in scale and achieved international status, along with those in Edinburgh and Dublin. After reading through over 200 shows in this year's catalogue, I've narrowed my Best Bets down to ten, in alphabetical order by performing artist or company. With so much to choose from, and an increased ticket price of $400 for an all-access pass, it's important to plan your schedule, to get the most out of the festival. Each of my top picks has an outstanding reputation in the cultural community, and all are trying exciting new approaches and offering boundary-breaking works in the Fringe. And, in keeping with the old Fringe tradition, some are still free!

- Aaron Cromie, Mary Tuomanen, and Genevieve Perrier, A Paper Garden (FREE)
- Accrocrag, A Series of Tests
- Brian Sanders' JUNK, Dancing Dead
- Curio Theatre Company, Lord of the Flies (FREE)
- Idiopathic Ridiculopathy Consortium, Max Frisch's The Arsonists
- Luna, How to Disappear Completely and Never Be Found
- New City Stage Company, Savage/Love and Tongues
- Ombelico Mask Ensemble, Run Grunt Sing: An Open Air Theatric (FREE)
- The Philadelphia Artists' Collective, The Oresteia Project
- Theatre Exile, The Aliens

For more detailed information about the shows, dates, and individual ticket prices, log on to the Fringe website at http://www.livearts-fringe.org/index.cfm and check my online posts at http://central-voice.wordpress.com/.

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Three Top Picks in the Philadelphia Live Arts Festival

By Debra Miller
Philadelphia Arts and Culture Correspondent

The Philadelphia Live Arts Festival returns to venues throughout the city from September 1-18 this year, and features more than twenty events. Live Arts is the curated portion of the Philadelphia Fringe Festival, where some of the world's most avant-garde artists are invited by producing director Nick Stuccio, formerly of the Pennsylvania Ballet, to perform their work. While dance dominates this year's programming, there are also some intriguing world premieres in theater that promise to be "both entertaining and intellectually challenging."

Philadelphia's own Swim Pony Performing Arts offers a new interpretation of Shakespeare's "Scottish play" from the perspective of the deranged Lady Macbeth. Lady M combines chaotic sound with extreme movement, designed to heighten the supernatural text of the bloody classic. The all-female cast contains an expanded coven of ten witches (including Philly favorites Mary Lee Bednarek, Karen Getz, Charlotte Northeast, Catherine Palfenier, and Wendy Staton), along with Barrymore Award winner Catharine Slusar as the violent anti-heroine. Slusar co-conceived the play with Swim Pony founder Adrienne Mackey, who not only directs, but also created the ensemble's vocal arrangements. The 90-minute show runs September 1-9 at the Arts Bank, 601 South Broad Street. If you have a penchant for scary, dangerous women, this is the show for you!

Swim Pony Performing Arts' Lady M. Photo by Lisi Stoessel

Lucidity Suitcase Intercontinental's WHaLE OPTICS; copyright by Masa Ushioda, SpecialistStock, Kevin Monko, Thaddeus Phillips.

WHaLE OPTICS is the latest cutting-edge offering from Thaddeus Phillips' Lucidity Suitcase Intercontinental, also based in Philadelphia. Phillips is a best bet every year; his unique vision never fails to captivate. This 165-minute multimedia foray into the ocean is described as a "modern Moby Dick adventure (with microphones instead of harpoons)." Using documentary footage, live actors, inventive props, and a set design the size of a humpback whale, the intercontinental epic follows a sound engineer's quest to capture the leviathan's song. Global telecommunications, dinner at Applebee's, marimbas, and Carl Sagan, are also thrown into the hilarious mix, as floating objects and swirling sounds envelope the audience. WHaLE OPTICS is on stage September 1-11, at the Prince Music Theater, 1412 Chestnut Street.

Improbable's The Devil and Mister Punch. Photo courtesy of Improbable

Rounding out my top three is The Devil and Mister Punch by Improbable, one of London's leading forces in experimental theater. Based on the historic tradition of Punch and Judy puppet shows (especially popular in Victorian England, but ultimately dating back to 16th-century Italian commedia dell'arte), this darker version references the stock characters and props, while adding a new dimension—the story of the usually unseen puppeteers and a pair of desperate Vaudeville-era producers. You can catch the devilish 75-minute production, staged in a giant Victorian armoire, from Sept 8-16, at Christ Church Neighborhood House, 20 North American Street.

For more information, tickets, and the full line-up, see the Live Arts website at http://ticketing.theatrealliance.org/sites/livearts/productions.aspx?org=la.

PHILA. MUSIC:
Up Close & Personal with Christine Havrilla

BY DEBRA MILLER, PHILADELPHIA ARTS AND CULTURE CORRESPONDENT

Christine Havrilla has long been a staple on the Philadelphia music scene. She's been featured in Philadelphia Magazine, City Paper, Curve, and on MP3.com. But I hadn't met her until May, when I was invited by Havrilla supporter Gary Regulski to attend a "house concert" he booked in Wilmington, Delaware, at the home of mutual friends Carol Hertzoff and Steve Marino. Expecting a short acoustic set, I was surprised by an electric guitar with a portable wall of sound, and an exciting new focus on a project called Gypsy Fuzz. Open, warm, and very comfortable in front of an intimate audience, Havrilla charmed the crowd and agreed to an interview with Central Voice.

DM: Tell readers a little about your house concerts, where we met. I think it's a great idea to generate excitement--a way for fans to get to know you, and for you to connect personally with your audience.

CH: Years ago this kind of concert started outside DC, in Maryland; now they're popping up all over the US. Originally they were held every month, unplugged. It was such a different atmosphere, where everyone could stay, hang out, have some food. It was more personable; I could recognize people who came. Though a charismatic artist can always make an audience feel close, there's still a mystery on stage, where the musicians are removed from the people. The house concerts let audiences know that musicians are people, too! Plus it gives me the opportunity to be more experimental and spontaneous; it's more relaxed up close. It's a treat to do these types of shows interwoven with music venues.

DM: Since you moved to the West Coast in 2010, how has the different environment affected you; has it given you any new inspiration?

CH: It's definitely a different vibe with the change of scenery. Portland is somewhere between a small city and a big town; it's very friendly and supportive of new artists. There's energy in the air, it's a great creative community. It's always a little hard to readjust, but I'm trying to balance that by being bi-coastal, with four trips a year back East. My July concerts in New Hope, Easton, Rehoboth, and Bryn Mawr (where I once lived and played The Point), and the benefit for NJ Ride against AIDS, gave me a chance to reconnect with friends, fans, and favorite venues. I still have family and a lot of connections here!

Christine Havrilla pumping her fist to Gypsy Fuzz.
Photo by Tiana Godfrey

DM: What's the new direction or change in style from your previous solo work to your music for Gypsy Fuzz?

CH: The new music has layers of sound. I love to create sound and textures, so we're using a wall of sound, with pedals and looping. Sometimes it's good to play old songs simply, but I don't want to play the same thing every time. I like to be spontaneous--my brain is always updating. Though I'm focusing on Gypsy Fuzz now, I'll still do individual shows. But I tapped into the West Coast recording scene with the brilliant Larry Crane, so the Gypsy Fuzz recording includes two musicians from Philly, two from Toronto, one each from Chicago and Seattle; plus there will be violin and cello, and two girl backup singers. It's exciting to crush it all together, to shake it up, and, I hope, to gain some new fans.

DM: What's your earliest creative memory?

CH: Listening to music while driving to the store with my Mom, tapping and humming; I was about four. We had a guitar and instruments at home, since my father was a musician--he played guitar with a gospel group. Plus I always drew, and always participated in sports.

DM: What in general inspires you?

CH: I try to walk every day in nature; I love the hush, it blocks out the buzz. I love good films; one scene alone can push a button and give me the concept for a new song. I've been listening to a lot of classical music and jazz lately; the emotion moves me, I can really tap into the vibe. I've also been inspired by a great book I read called Zen Guitar by Philip Toshio Sudo. It says "even if you don't know, play with all your heart" [referencing the Zen saying, "Paths cannot be taught, they can only be taken."]

DM: Any updates on your Fall schedule?

CH: The Gypsy Fuzz CD has a September release, so we'll be touring around mid-October in Philly, New Jersey, New York, Delaware, and Maryland, and I hope Harrisburg (where, in the old days, I played The Wire and the Whitaker Center). We also just confirmed two shows at the Tin Angel in Philly for New Year's Eve! You can check out all the exact dates and venues on my website, www.christinehavrilla.com.

Havrilla taking a break. *Photo by Tiana Godfrey*

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The classic Mel Brooks movie is ALIVE... and it's headed here! You'll have a monstrously good time at this spectacular new production, winner of the 2008 Outer Critics Circle Award and the Broadway.com Audience Award for BEST MUSICAL! Don't miss the sensational cast delivering all your favorite moments from the classic film, plus brand-new show-stopping numbers for the stage, including "Transylvania Mania,""He Vas My Boyfriend" and "Puttin' on the Ritz."

WHITAKER CENTER

Sept. 15, 8 p.m., The Forum
Bret Michaels - Get Your Rock On Tour 2011
Tickets $75, $55, $40
After a sold out performance in Harrisburg last fall, Whitaker Center welcomes back Mechanicsburg native Bret Michaels.

Aside from being a multi-platinum selling artist, actor/producer, winner of Celebrity Apprentice 3 and reality star of Bret Michaels: Life As I Know It, Michaels is if nothing else, a true survivor. He has survived a lifelong battle as an insulin dependent diabetic, as well as a publicized near fatal car crash in 1994.

Sept. 23, 7:30 p.m.
Carolina Chocolate Drops
Sunoco Performance Theater, 7:30pm
Tickets $25, $30
With a refreshing folk style, Carolina Chocolate Drops made their mark with Dona Got a Ramblin' Mind released to wide acclaim, followed by three additional independent albums. In 2010, Genuine Negro Jig earned the Drops a Grammy® Award for Best Traditional Folk Album.

STRAND-CAPITOL

k.d. lang & The Siss Boom Bang
Sept. 30, 7:30 p.m.
Tickets: $57, $63, $68
With special guest Teddy Thompson and back by popular demand after her 2009 sellout at the Strand, kd lang is one of the foremost artists performing today. Tony Bennett calls her "the best singer of her generation." Don't miss the Grammy®-winning singer of hits like Constant Craving and Miss Chatelaine when she returns to York with a new band, The Siss Boom Bang, and a new album, Sing It Loud.

Wanda Sykes
Oct. 16, 7:30 p.m.
Tickets $50, $54, $61
With special guest Keith Robinson and hailed one of Entertainment Weekly's 25 Funniest People in America, you may know her as the star of The New Adventures of Old Christine and her own late-night talk show or from appearances on HBO's Curb Your Enthusiasm and Inside the NFL. The quick-witted comedienne is the winner of four Emmys®, Comedy Central's Funniest TV Actress Award and the American Comedy Award for Outstanding Female Stand-Up Comic. Mature themes, language.

Lancaster events

Suburban Pennsylvania Fall Home Show
Lancaster Convention Center
October 7-9
The Home Show is an event designed for homeowners in all stages of remodeling, landscaping and decorating. Includes hundreds of exhibits with merchandise, sample interior and exterior vignettes, and product demonstrations. www.acshomeshow.com

Five Nuggets of Life Advice from Peter Drucker
Oct. 4, 4 & 5:30 p.m.
Manheim Township Public Library
595 Granite Run Dr
Lancaster, PA 17601 US
http://www.mtpl.info/content/five-nuggets-life-advice-peter-drucker
Presented by Bruce Rosenstein, author of Living in More Than One World: How Peter Drucker's Wisdom Can Inspire and Transform Your Life (Berrett-Koehler, 2009).

The (Gay) Gaga Interview

Superstar talks activism, her legacy and how being a gay icon is a 'tall order'

By Chris Azzopardi

Photo courtesy: Meeno

Lady Gaga is one of the biggest superstars in the world. But speaking to her only briefly during this rare interview, she evades her larger-than-life image with affable charm, self-deprecating humor (take that, so-called penis) and a down-to-earth demeanor. She's sweet, perverted, articulate and talkative. And she can't stop gushing about how much her fans mean to her – and when I have to cut her off to get a few last minute questions in, she doesn't pull a diva trip. She's cordial as can be. "I could talk to you forever, you're so cute," she says, almost in baby goo-goo, ga-ga talk.

Point is, Gaga doesn't sound like someone who just scored the best first-week sales of the year so far with "Born This Way,", her opus that seems to position her as the Mother Teresa of music. Since we last spoke, nearly two years ago when "Just Dance" was charting, she was barely a blip on the pop scene. How quickly things can change.

This time, Gaga spoke about inspiring young gay people, why she cried for a week straight, what she'd do with an Ann Coulter-like kid and the legacy she wants to leave.

We have lots more to talk about this time than your love for Italian sausages.

(Laughs) I love Italian sausages ... as much as I love my own.

Don't take this the wrong way, but as a fashion icon I have to ask: What are you wearing?

I'm actually in a black bra and underwear. That's it. The top one is lace and the bottom one is just plain and silky. This is my daywear. I'm walking around my hotel room and I'm going to yoga soon, and I probably won't change. (Laughs)

How did you spend your last day off?

I watched "So You Think You Can Dance,", and I've been planning my performances for the next few months for television and getting ready for the new tour.

That's work. That's not time off, Gaga.

(Laughs) I know, I know. I always do that. I'm sorry. I don't really take time off. I try, but I think I find comfort in my creativity. It's like a warm blanket for me, so I will end up in some sort of way creating something or writing something.

How do you feel about your role as a gay icon and a leader in the lgbt rights movement?

Photo courtesy: Nick Knight

That's a really, really tall order and quite a description. I never set out to be a gay icon or become one or be revered as one, and I'm just really grateful to all the people that have believed in me and my music and my work. The most special thing of all has been that my sort of assimilation as a public figure has very organically stemmed out of who my natural friends were in high school.

I had a lot of gay friends growing up, not even realizing they were gay. We didn't really talk about it and I went to theater school and I did a lot of shows, so I guess it never really mattered to me if they were gay or straight – and we never really talked about it. We just loved talking about music and art and theater and fashion. So now it's less about being a leader and more just about being a part of my generation and being part of the fight for equality that I feel is part of who I am and part of my childhood, and part of where I'm going.

The message you stand for as a public figure – about being yourself no matter who you are – is also a big part of "Born This Way".

The album was inspired by the spirit of the fans, the spirit of the show and the spirit of people all over the world every night talking to me about social justice and sharing their stories with me and me realizing that my mission with music was driven in a very specific way at this point. So social justice has to be the most paramount issue that I address on the album.

I wish I knew who you were when I was a teenager. Young people these days are lucky to have such a role model.

That's so sweet. Thanks for saying that. I hope that I can really be that, and I hope that they know that it's so genuine and so authentic.

Which album gave you a sense of belonging and allowed you to be yourself when you were a kid?

I always talk about Green Day, because "Dookie" was the first album that I went to buy on my own. I think because I got bullied in school there was something I really appreciated about punk culture. It allowed me to feel unified with something that was separate from my community at school. Even though I didn't have a lot of punk friends or I didn't go to punk shows – because when I was 13, my mother would never have allowed me to leave the house and go downtown to see a punk show – just having the album in my hands and reading the lyrics and listening to the music made me feel like I was a punk, feel like a Green Day fan, feel like I was part of a union that was separate from my situation. That's really carried through into my music and my dream and my message. But what's been so great is social media. Unlike when I was a kid, my fans now have a way to get to know each other and be connected through social media so that the culture can grow.

And you're using social networking a lot as a political platform, urging fans to step up in the fight for equality.

Oh yeah. I just got on Twitter and I was firing away like I was on the Senate floor. I couldn't stop because I think to myself, almost instantly, there are 11 million people who are receiving this message from me and they have to know what's going on. Even if I just get five people to call in New York, I can make that small bit of difference.

Photo courtesy: Nick Knight

If you had a daughter and you found out she was going to be the next Ann Coulter, what would you do?

Oh. I'd have to have a sit-down with her.

What's been the most rewarding moment of your career so far?

So many different things. It was a very, very huge shock for me when I heard the album sales for _Born This Way_. I just cried for, like, a week straight. (Laughs) It was seven full days of rainwater tears. I think I could've filled an entire ocean

continued on next page >

< Gaga

Photo courtesy: Nick Knight

of gratitude. I just worked so hard on the music and I cared so much that the fans loved it, and all that mattered to me was they loved it. The feedback of the music and of the videos has been so wonderful.

I sat down with the label and I talked to my team and we talked about the new album cycle and I said to them, "I don't want for the goal of this to be that we gain new fans. If we gain new fans, that's wonderful. But the goal for me is to strengthen my artistic evolution and strengthen the bond between the fans." That was the single most important thing to me. Not to sell more records, not to gain more fans, not to convert people that didn't like me before to like me now. That was not what I wanted. What I wanted to do was to look out into the crowd and know that they were stronger than ever, and the thing that has been the most exciting for me is to watch that happen, because what we have – what I have witnessed so far with the release of this album – is that the super fan section of my fans has grown.

This is basically a dedication to your Little Monsters, right?

It's a dedication, exactly. It's not fair-weather fans. These are real fans.

If you could be reincarnated as a real living monster, what would you come back as?

Myself. But I would have all my protrusions be real and I would be a real fairy monster.

How gay of you.

I know. But she would be mean and fierce, too. And have a fake mole. And I would be able to instantly change a wig with a thought in my mind or change my bone structure based on my thoughts.

It's like a drag queen's dream.

Yeah. It's my dream. It's every girl's dream! (Laughs)

Two of your songs are named after human features – "Hair" and "Teeth." What's the next body part you'll write about?

Who knows. I didn't even think of it that way. Where should I go next? I don't know. I've already been thinking about the next album, though. Don't shoot me.

Can you give us a glimpse into that one?

No, no. Stay on this one. We're not done yet. (Laughs) I am planning on making the "You and I" video, though, and I'm really excited about that.

Everyone talks about overexposure when you're as big of a star as you are. Does that worry you at all?

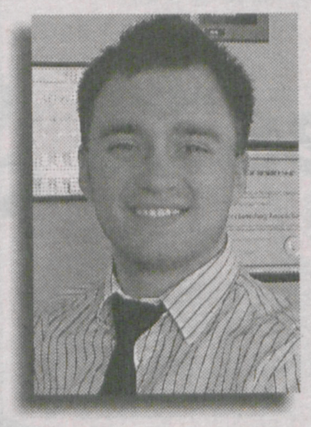
No. You're just a right or left click away from the other direction.

Have you thought about the legacy you want to leave and what that might be?

Yes, I have. And it changes and grows. I would say that my wish is to be remembered as a cultural force, as someone who was fearless and unpredictable, who didn't care what anyone thought about what I have created but only cared that they thought about it.

Photo courtesy: Meeno

LGBT community center coalition



Center Expands Youth Programs to Carlisle

By Louie Marven
Director of Education & Youth Services
LGBT Community Center Coalition of Central PA

As students are heading back to school this fall, we remember that many lgbtq students will face bullying and harassment based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. For these students, a teacher with a safe zone sticker on their door, a guidance counselor who knows about local resources for lgbtq youth, or the presence of a gay-straight alliance (GSA) can make a world of positive difference. The Center's youth program arm Common Roads advocates for this type of support in our local schools by training professional staff on working with lgbtq youth and by providing technical assistance to GSA's.

90 Unduplicated Youth

As many readers know, Common Roads also holds weekly meetings for lgbtq youth. Our Harrisburg chapter meets weekly on Friday nights at the Center's offices at 221 N Front Street, and our Lancaster chapter meets weekly on Friday nights at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 538 W Chestnut Street. In the first two quarters of 2011, over 90 unduplicated youth have participated in our "safe space" programs.

TFEC Grant

I am pleased to share that a $1,250 grant from The Greater Harrisburg Foundation, a regional foundation of The Foundation for Enhancing Communities (TFEC), will help the Center launch a new chapter of Common Roads in Carlisle this fall. Opening another chapter of Common Roads will create more access for lgbtq youth to connect with each other and positive adult role models, and I look forward to building relationships with new volunteers, partners, and supporters in the Carlisle area.

Weekly "safe space" meetings consist of social and educational programs that create an affirming, adult-supervised space for lgbtq youth to interact and learn about local resources, health, arts and culture, and life skills. Whether we are visiting galleries at First Friday, practicing resume-writing skills, or discussing healthy relationships, lgbtq youth have been connected and supported through unique Common Roads programs for over 18 years, and the Center is thrilled to extend this opportunity to more youth by opening another meeting space.

New-look Web Site: www.centralpalgbtcenter.org.

Gamut Theatre Presents Dracula

Gamut Theatre Group, as the first installment of its Stage Door Series initiative for the 2011-2012 season presents Bram Stoker's Dracula, adapted by Sean Christopher Adams and Robert Campbell. Performances are Sept. 9, 10, 16 and 17 at 7:30 p.m. at Gamut Classic Theatre on the third floor of Strawberry Square in downtown Harrisburg. Dracula is sponsored by Mechanicsburg Mystery Bookshop.

The Stage Door Series began last season, and offers diverse, exciting, classically-themed programming with simpler technical elements than a Mainstage season production, focusing simply on the words and emotional journeys in a piece. All productions in the Stage Door Series are Bring Your Own Price, where any size donation buys admission to the show. The Series' motto is "Come as you are, pay what you will."

Dracula is directed by former Gamut core company actor Jeff Luttermoser, who was drawn to the mysterious elements of the story. "As a culture we sometimes become buried in science and reason, and forget that much of our world is still a mystery," he said. "Dracula takes a generation of educated and reasonable men and women, and introduces them to something primal and awful, which they all must learn to accept as reality in order to have any hope in living through the horror."

Luttermoser worked closely with Adams and Campbell on the adaptation of Stoker's classic novel. "Our goal was a faithful theatrical adaptation, creating a world on stage in which the characters' thoughts can be heard, and the effect of each one's actions can be seen and felt," he explained.

Luttermoser's concept involves bringing the world of Dracula to life through the use of voiceovers and creative sound design. In Stoker's novel, the story is told through several different viewpoints using the journals, diaries, letters and telegrams of the characters.

The cast features Thomas Abraham in the titular role; Sean Christopher Adams as Jonathan Harker, Alexis Dow Campbell as Mina Harker, Amber Wagner Mann as Lucy Westenra, Robert Campbell as John Seward, Jeff Luttermoser and Arthur Holmwood, Ian Potter as Quincey Morris, David Newhouse as Renfield, Karen Ruch as Mrs. Westenra and Gamut Theatre Artistic Director J. Clark Nicholson as Van Helsing. The production will feature sound design by Joe Gualtier, lighting design by Karen Gasser, and costume coordination by Brenda C. Eppley.

California's Hwy. 1
Los Angeles to San Francisco

It's true that most who travel between the West Coast's largest gay meccas, Los Angeles and San Francisco, do so by way of a simple one-hour flight. But there's a great reason for driving between these two cities, and not even by way of the most direct route (along I-5). The often narrow and windy coastal route, using Hwy. 1 and - optionally - portions of the faster U.S. 101 - takes a minimum of 10 hours to drive. But this roughly 450-mile tour passes through some of the most spectacularly scenery in North America, from soaring coastal palisades to vineyard-studded wine country. If you're an ardent road-tripper, you owe it to yourself to make this drive at least once in your life.

I'm providing a blueprint for making this tour south to north (starting in coastal L.A.), with several overnights. It's perfectly fine to plan your trip from north to south. Whatever you decide, allow yourself at least three days to make this trip, and aim for a week if possible. You could easily spend two weeks on this adventure and never run out of cool things to see and do, especially if you tack on some days at either end, around Los Angeles and San Francisco. Be aware that most rental-car companies charge a $100 to $150 drop-off fee (or a higher daily rate in this range) for picking up a car in one city and returning it in another. Alternatively, you can make this a round-trip drive (for a quicker return, take I-5 through the San Joaquin Valley - the drive takes between six and seven hours).

Start your journey in the coastal section of L.A. - the neighboring communities of Venice Beach and Santa Monica have much to offer and enjoy a low-keyed but substantial gay following. The only gay bar along the coast is the endearingly quirky and fun Roosterfish, along Abbot Kinney Boulevard in Venice, which is rife with trendy restaurants and design shops. Also be sure to explore lower Santa Monica's engaging Main Street, which is also a great source of offbeat shopping and fun cafes. In lively downtown Santa Monica, you'll find chic retail at the open-air Santa Monica Place, and it's also worth timing your visit with the Santa Monica Farmers Market, held on Wednesday and Saturday mornings. Santa Monica is also a great bas for visiting one of the world's most talked-about art museums, the Getty Center, which is as famous for its precious holdings as for architect Richard Meier's striking - and controversial - design. Also, at the northern end of Santa Monica you'll find the area's top gay beach, at Will Rogers State Beach - on a sunny day, there are few more enjoyable places to people-watch.

The area abounds with great restaurants, including pan-Latin Border Grill, which is run by the highly talented and engaging chefs Mary Sue Milliken and (openly lesbian) Susan Feniger, of cookbook and TV cooking-show fame. Other downtown Santa Monica standouts include Blue Plate Oysterette and Rustic Canyon, and right near the Santa Monica border in Venice, the Rose Cafe and Market is a perfect stop for grabbing coffee, sandwiches, and gourmet picnic supplies.

Accommodations in Santa Monica and Venice

Loews Santa Monica Beach (www.santamonicaloewshotel.com), a swanky beachfront resort; Embassy Hotel Apartments (www.embassyhotelapts.com), quirky, historic, and moderately priced with central Santa Monica location; and Hotel Erwin (www.jdvhotels.com/hotels/losangeles/erwin), hip boutique hotel overlooking Venice Beach.

From Santa Monica, if you take the longer, scenic way up the coast on Hwy. 1, it's about a two-hour drive to one of the most beautiful small cities on the West Coast, lovely Santa Barbara. Upon arriving in town, grab lunch somewhere overlooking the ocean - both Brophy Bros. Seafood and the less touristy Boathouse at Hendry's Beach are excellent choices. Then head inland into the dramatic foothills above downtown to reach the Mission Santa Barbara, the 10th of 21 Franciscan missions built in California during the 18th century, and the nearby Santa Barbara Botanic Garden; allow a couple hours to appreciate these attractions. For sunset drinks and appetizers, drive east through the foothills to San Ysidro Ranch, a stunning resort in Montecito.

Even by coastal California's high standards, Santa Barbara stands out when it comes to culinary prowess. If you're in town for just one night, do not miss out on dinner at Seagrass Restaurant, which serves refined farm-to-table regional cuisine, with an emphasis on local seafood. Nowhere along the central coast will you find any full-time gay bars, but Santa Barbara does have some fun mixed hangouts, including Wildcat Lounge - which has a mostly gay night on Sundays - and Elsie's Tavern.

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Stonewall Democrats Make Endorsements

By Steve Dorko
Chair, Capital Region Stonewall Democrats

The Capital Region Stonewall Democrats interviewed candidates seeking Dauphin County Row Offices and we are endorsing three of them for the November 8 election: Rogette Harris for Register of Wills & Clerk of the Orphans' Court; Eboni Bryant for Recorder of Deeds; and Phil Zulli for District Attorney.

As a political action committee, our mission is accomplished through encouraging the lgbt community and the community-at-large to support those qualified candidates who are committed to advancing equal rights for all citizens. We believe that Harris, Bryant, and Zulli are the best choices for voters and want voters to know them for their pro-lgbt commitment.

Public commitment to the community for Harris began in her college years, where as President of the University of Pittsburgh Democrats, she was involved in collaboration with the Gay-Straight Alliance to assure a safe and supportive environment for all students. She also participated in lobbying with the United States Student Association in favor of advancing lgbt equality. Harris currently researches and writes legislation to improve the lives of Pennsylvania families for the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. She has researched and worked on policy dealing with adoption, probate law, and marriage law that preside over the Registers' office.

When asked why lgbt voters should vote for her Nov. 8, Rogette said, "Voters in Dauphin County have a choice this year to decide who will move Dauphin County forward.

The Register of Wills office is more service and administrative oriented than policy or ideological. I believe I am the most qualified candidate because I have the professional and life experiences to not only run the Registers' office but to improve its services to Dauphin County Residents. I was born and raised in Dauphin County and have been involved in my community and fighting for justice since a teenager when I wrote my first bill concerning discrimination at the age of 16.

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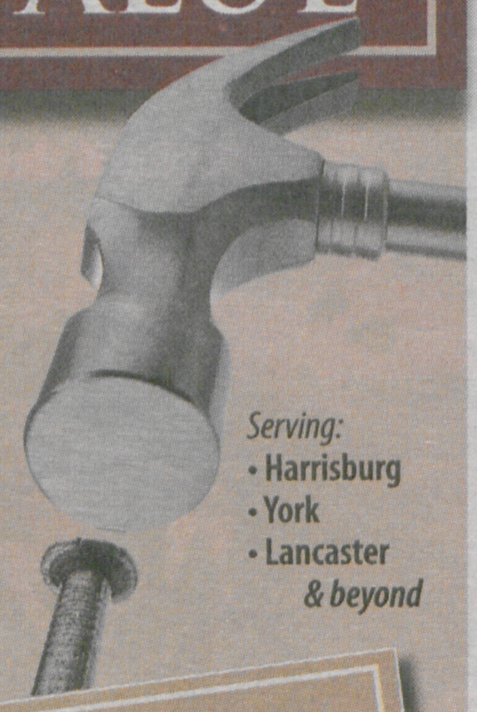

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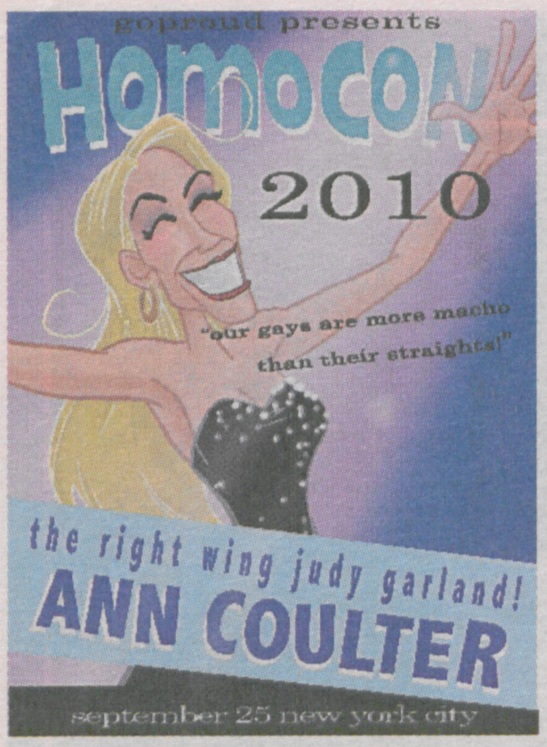

GOProud Embacing Their Oppression?

By David Mixner

Always have been considered a solid Democrat although at times I have strayed from the party. Matters of personal principles and values should be priorities in your party selection. Often one's involvement with an American political party is determined by your upbringing and family history. Conservative values are a part of many lgbt citizens' lives from a very early age. There are members of the Green Party and Socialist parties that can't understand and highly disapprove of my Democratic tendencies. lgbt citizens must have the freedom to make the choices politically where they feel they can most effectively move our struggle for freedom forward. However, it doesn't mean I always understand those choices.

Over the years, I have written some checks to the Log Cabin clubs because I believe they have done very important work. When they have asked I have supported some of their candidates for local office when I knew it would break down long-held barriers for all of the lgbt community. They were a crucial part of the coalition in the New York marriage equality efforts. They went to court on DADT and won a huge judicial victory for the community. Most importantly I knew their purpose, while disagreeing with them ideologically, was to advance the cause of equal rights for lgbt citizens. Many of them have paid a great price for their beliefs within a very hostile environment and they have my respect and admiration.

GOProud is a different issue.

My feelings on this group have ranged from anger to compassion. For them to basically disown the essence of their very being by participating and supporting groups and individuals whose purpose is to damage them and their community is bafflingly and dark. The brilliant organizer Torie Osborn talks about "oppression sickness" in the lgbt

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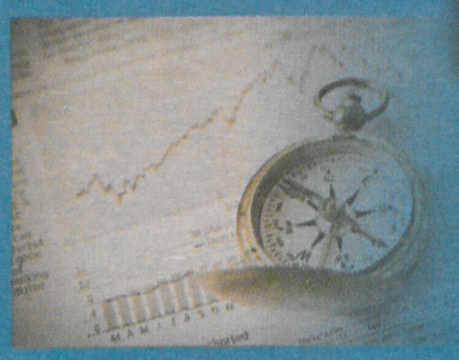

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Endorsements continued from page 26

As a candidate for Dauphin County Register of Wills & Clerk of the Orphans' Court, I have policy experience on local, state, and national levels. Dauphin County needs not only new leadership, but a new generation of leadership that can take Dauphin County to the next level with a clear plan to make Dauphin County more prosperous and better equipped to serve Dauphin County residents."

Bryant served as the PA Department of Public Welfare's Statewide Housing Director prior to announcing her candidacy for Recorder of Deeds. She served as the Department's top housing official for the state's Money Follows the Person Rebalancing Demonstration. Joining the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 2006 as a Pennsylvania Management Associate, Bryant also served as the Equal Opportunity Officer for the PA Department of Revenue. In this capacity, she developed the agency's Equal Opportunity Plan, investigated allegations of discrimination, and oversaw the Department's Multicultural/Diversity Program Planning Committee.

Prior to employment within Pennsylvania state government, Bryant worked in various leadership capacities in the field of public health with non-profit, community-based and national organizations; research institutions; and local and state health departments. She worked with prevention programs on a range of health-related topics, including teen pregnancy, obesity, youth violence, and HIV/AIDS/STD prevention.

When asked about her actions to support the lgbt community, Eboni stated, "I worked as an HIV/STD prevention coordinator with a non-profit organization in Richmond, VA. Not only did I work with pre-and post-op transgendered individuals and gay and lesbian individuals as co-workers, we all collaborated to facilitate risk reduction and prevention education classes for this population. I also worked with the National Sexual Violence Resource Center as the national subject matter/public health expert on sexual violence. I served as a resource in sexual violence prevention among the lgbt community."

Zulli has been a practicing attorney for twenty-five years. He has broad experience at both the trial level and the appellate level and in all the three main areas of law: administrative, civil and criminal law. Phil has extensive management experience in supervising attorneys when he was at the state, managing a not-for-profit association and his own law firm.

In his professional practice Zulli consults with same-sex couples to prepare documents such as deeds, powers of attorney, living wills, last wills and testaments, and pre-arranged funeral arrangements so that they may name, identify, and make unequivocally clear to all, their desire for their partner's full participation in life's events. In his volunteer work as a Sunday school teacher, Zulli consistently instructs his students with the message that sexual orientation is not a choice and that all individuals have the God given right to be treated equally and fairly.

Dauphin County voters have the opportunity to elect three highly qualified pro-lgbt candidates Nov. 8: Harris, Bryant, and Zulli. A vote for these candidates, who will be elected officials responsive to lgbt citizens, is a vote to make everyday life better for lgbt individuals and their families.

GOProud continued from page 27

community. Basically, it is when a person has become so scarred and battered by the discrimination they have experienced all their lives that they act out in wild ways often against their very own welfare.

The desire to belong always powerfully tugs at our souls. Doesn't make any difference if it is to join the military, to be the head of your professional organization or in sports and yes, in your ideologically compatible community. My guess is over the years most of us have felt that tug.

GOProud is buying into their own oppression in order to belong. They have embraced a tragic path of dancing, singing and performing for their oppressors - saying the outrageous to be noticed and to be accepted and invited to the 'party.' Even when they get the door slammed in their faces after they play their part, GOProud blindly explains the rejection away. What a horrible, horrible role model for young lgbt Republicans. That they should abandon their pride, dignity and honor to be accepted by people who only wish to harm them makes them the poster children for "oppression sickness."

When I toured the Holocaust Museum on a private tour right after it opened in 1993, the rabbi giving me the tour spoke of how in the early days of the Third Reich some rich German Jews actually supported the Nazi Party. They believed that Jewish shop keepers gave the Jewish community a bad name and had brought on their own oppression by their devout ways. As the Rabbi said, "Rich or poor it didn't make any difference. We all ended up in the same camps"

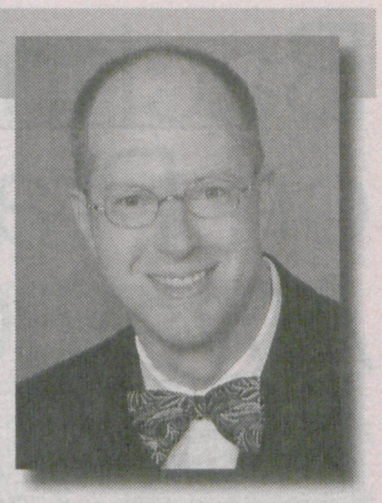
Never would I deny the members of GOProud the right to their ideological beliefs or their desire to participate fully in the fulfillment of those beliefs. It is why up to this point I have never written about them. However, like anti-Semitic Jews, their actions have reached a point where they have become a tragic and sad story of self-hatred, lack of respect and pitiful attempts to be accepted by the unacceptable.

DON'T ASK. JUST .ning ME.

thecentralvoice.ning.com

legal column

Advise for All the Twenty-somethings



Leo L. Dunn, Attorney at Law

Volunteering at the Chamber of Commerce booth at Harrisburg Pride Fest is always fun. I like to watch and listen to people who stop by. Their questions often make me think of things from a different perspective. This year was no different. In fact the impetus for this article came from talking with three different young couples. None of whom had any legal documents in place, but all of whom were very serious about their relationships and their future together. Stop here.

If you are really serious about your relationship, you need to keep in mind what stage it's in and what you need to do to protect yourself and your partner at each stage. Twenty-somethings are usually in what I think of as Stages 1 thru 3.

Stage 1 is once the initial dating is over and you decide to live together as a couple to see how well things work out. During this stage most couples keep their assets separate, keep track of their own financial matters, and both write checks to cover joint household expenses. If the relationship doesn't work out, one person simply moves out and there's not much at issue besides the emotions. At this stage, you do not need a lawyer.

Stage 2 is when you are truly getting into the relationship. Everything is going well and you feel things are good for the long haul. You're living together, starting to buy household items together, and thinking about buying a home together or starting a family. At this stage, you don't need a lawyer but having a domestic partnership agreement drawn up is a good idea.

Stage 3 is when you go beyond sharing a household. This is when you decide to buy a major asset together or start a family. Now you need a lawyer.

When you are just living together and keeping all possessions separate and maintaining most finances separately, if something happens to one person or the relationship goes on the rocks, it's not too difficult to separate your stuff and go on with life. It's just the two of you and what you do doesn't affect other people or have any major long term impacts. When you decide to buy a house together or start a family, your actions will affect you long term (30 year mortgage?) or affect another human being who has no say in what you (children have no decisional rights until 18). You need to stop and think before you act, especially if you decide to start a family.

Before you start stage 3, you should meet with a lawyer. You can discuss the best manner of taking ownership of a house so that both of you are protected. At this point, you should also make sure you each have a power of attorney, health care directive, will, life insurance, health insurance and hopefully disability insurance in place before you buy the house!

If you are starting a family, you need to meet with an attorney before you get pregnant! Yes, as a young lesbian you can have a child any time as long as you have a sperm donor, but don't do it without having documents in place to protect the child. Your brother's friend may agree to donate, but do you really want him legally in your life for the next 18 years? Because if he doesn't give up his parental rights before you conceive, he's daddy and entitled to custody to the same extent you are. You probably don't want a man in your life who acts like he's the ex from hell and you never married him. A better way is to slow down, get a donor who has given up his parental rights, perhaps get married in D.C., and make arrangements to have the child in New Jersey so both you and your wife are listed as parents on the birth certificate.

For guys, you want to adopt and make sure that everything is arranged so that your partner becomes the other parent through a second parent adoption. A bit complicated, but well worth the time and effort.

Listen to the old guy and save yourself some heartache and money in the long term. Get your legal paperwork in order before your relationship enters Stage 3!

Leo Dunn is an attorney who practices estate planning in Harrisburg with a focus on serving the needs of the GLBT community. He may be reached at leo@leodunnlaw.com or 717-503-1207.

Lebanon Valley College events

Community Concert Commemorating Sept 11, 2001
Sun., Sept. 11, 3 p.m.
Lebanon Valley College, Miller Chapel
Members from several church of the Annville-Cleona Area Council of Churches have formed a combined community choir which will join the LVC Chamber Choir to present a series of anthems commemorating the 10th anniversary of Sept 11, 2001. Prayers and readings will mark the interludes.

Interfaith Banquet: Nature-based Religions
Sun., Oct. 30, 5 p.m.
Lebanon Valley College, Mund College Center.
Members of local Wiccan and other nature-based religious communities will come to the College to share about the significance and rich symbolism of the Samhain (pronounced "SOW-in") holiday. The event will feature live music, a ritual demonstration, and a banquet of delicious fall foods. Admission: $12/General; $30/Family with children. Call the Office of Spiritual Life at 867-6135 by Oct. 25 to register. Seating is limited.

Bachmanns on Praying Away Gay

By Frank Pizzoli

Central Voice talked to Wayne Besen and John Becker, of Truth Wins Out (TWO), on Michele and Marcus Bachmann's "Pray Away the Gay" problem.

Becker

By mid-summer, media of every kind – network, cable, Internet, blogs – were flush with interviews on what has become known as the "Pray Away the Gay" problem for presidential candidate Michelle Bachmann and husband Marcus.

At a Christian counseling clinic Bachmann and Associates, the Lake Elmo, Minn.-based clinic co-owned by the couple, TWO has secretly taped five counseling sessions between John Becker, 26, and a counselor who suggested to him that God made a man's eyes to appreciate a woman's body. Becker has been married to a man for five years whom he describes as "the center of my world".

"I had five, privately-paid for sessions from June 23 to June 30," Becker told *Central Voice*. He characterized the sessions and subsequent therapeutic suggestions made by his counselor as based on prayer, a better understanding of God, and that changing from homosexual to heterosexual was possible.

"Never did my counselor acknowledge that homosexual orientation is a naturally-occurring variation of human sexuality," Becker said. His feelings for men were treated as an outside force that prayer could heal. "My counselor said that being heterosexual is the core value of how God has created us," Becker explained. Marcus Bachmann is squarely on the record in previous media statements as referring to gay people as "Barbarians" who need "discipline".

The controversy focuses less on "reparative therapy" than on the fact that Marcus Bachmann has repeatedly said his counseling service did not offer such therapy. The therapy's claim that one can change sexual orientation from homosexual or lesbian to heterosexual is discredited as false by both the American Psychiatric Association and the American Psychological Association. Those organizations, and former MTV host and now on-air cable face Dr. Drew Pinsky, have described the practice as potentially harmful to individuals already feeling the social strains of rejection from churches, family, schools, and bullying. Becker said he founded the sessions "very emotionally draining and I'm an actor-performer. What about individuals who are less equipped and vulnerable," he asked?

Further stoking the controversy is that the clinic has received $137,000 in federal funds for treating patients in Medicaid-backed programs. NBC's Michael Isikoff reports the previously unreported payments are on top of the $24,000 in federal and state funds that the clinic received in recent years under a state grant to train its employees, state records show. The figures were provided to NBC News in response to a Freedom of Information request. These revelations bait the question: Have the Bachmann's used taxpayer funds to train therapists in the use of reparative therapy?

Besen

TWO founder Besen told Central Voice that "Michele Bachmann made her career on touting her strong beliefs. Now she is willing to discard her principles for political expediency. It is time the Bachmann's admit they do reparative therapy and stop running from their record."

See interviews with John Becker, Wayne Besen, others by MSNBC, NBC Nightline, Chris Matthews, and Anderson Cooper at www.TruthWinsOut.org
For more information on Bachmann's positions @ www.youtube.com/watch?v=n9Yzy6Mt4k8&feature

2010 CENSUS DATA | *Connecting the dots...*

Is Change Threatening?

Follow-up census surveys say the nation's capacity to embrace demographic changes roughly falls into thirds.

Acceptors

31% are "Accepters" of change, ½ to 2/3 says trends make no difference to society. Of the remainder who express an opinion, more say 2010 census trends are good than say they're bad. Women, Hispanics, East Coast residents and adults who seldom or never attend religious services are more likely than others to be represented in this group.

Rejectors

32% rejects every trend that Accepters tolerate or endorse. A majority say most demographic changes are bad. The only trends they generally accept are interracial marriage and fewer women having children. They are the only group in which a majority (61%) that says it is harmful for mothers of small children to work outside the home. Whites, older adults, Republicans, the religiously observant and married adults are overrepresented in this group.

Skeptics

37% are the Skeptics, the largest group. They share most of the tolerant views of Accepters, but also express concern about the impact of trends on society. On one of the trends—single motherhood—they and the Accepters have stark differences. Virtually all Skeptics say mothers having children without a male partner to help raise them is bad for society. Among Accepters, 2% say this.

2010 CENSUS DATA | *Connecting the dots...*

State of Marriage ala USA

While about 23 million Americans watched Prince William and Kate Middleton marry, the latest Census data show the popularity of marriage as an institution continues to slip.

The 2010 Census shows married couples make up less than half (45 percent) of all households, a new low. In every state, Red or Blue, the number of unmarried couples, childless households, and single-person households grew faster than those comprised of married couples with children. The iconic dad, mom, and children families accounted for 43 percent of households in 1950. They now account for 20 percent.

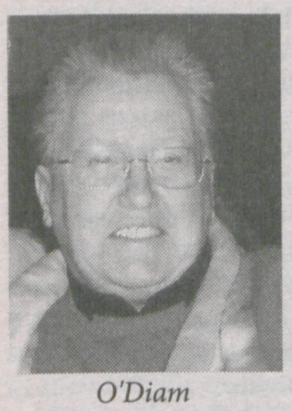
According to the National Marriage Project, Americans with a high-school degree or less (who account for 58 percent of the population) tell researchers they would like to marry, but do not believe they can afford it. Instead, they raise children out of wedlock. Only 6 percent of children born to college-educated mothers were born outside marriage. That compares with 44 percent of babies born to mothers whose education ended with high school.

"Less marriage means less income and more poverty," said Isabel Sawhill, Brookings Institution, told The Economist.

Researchers have linked as much as half of the income inequality in America to changes in family composition: single-parent families (mostly those with a high-school degree or less) are getting poorer while married couples with educations and dual incomes are increasingly well-off. "This is a striking gap that is not well understood by the public," she says.

Where are we?

continued from page one



O'Diam

"I am not invited there and I don't seek opportunities to 'make statements' there," she said. "I live my life and let people get to know me."

A network of friends, the Susquehanna River and changing seasons keeps O'Diam and Nell here. They're active with a Metropolitan Church of the Community group that focuses on relationships among women. There's a similar group for men.

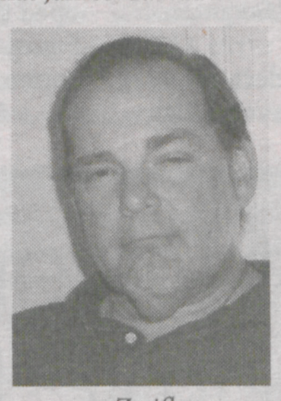
"Opportunities are around for couples to network," O'Diam said.

Not Alabama

Opportunity of a different kind is what brought Ken Suter, 48, an attorney for the state Department of State, and his partner of 9 years David Zwifka, 55, to the city.

"Jobs are a pull to come here and stay here," Suter said.

Originally from Buffalo, Zwifka was leery of joining his partner in Harrisburg. "I feared what James Carville said about central Pennsylvania would be true. That it's Alabama."



Zwifka

Now he finds the city "singularly non-threatening" and they're active with their Homeowners Association.

"Our sexual orientation has not affected how we live in our neighborhood," Suter said. When their house trim needed replacement a neighbor made the repair, no fanfare.

"Harrisburg has a big town feel," Zwifka said and they like being within easy travel to other cities.

More recent arrival Jessica Myers, 31, moved here last June to live with her new wife, Jessica Adams, 31. "I was teaching in Reading but quit my job to move here with her," Myers said.

Another attraction: Adams "works for a company in Harrisburg that offers domestic partnership benefits," Myers said.

They've never had a problem at work, school or church.

"We're not sure how the neighbors feel," Myers said, explaining they feel "the least comfortable" about them, although they do hold hands and walk around their block.

"I would not necessarily recommend Pennsylvania, but Harrisburg or Lancaster seems pretty open," Myers said.

She was surprised by the Census data showing a higher number of same-sex female couples, in both the city and the state. "I was a bit surprised," she said thinking maybe the numbers are a reflection of "self reporting" meaning that fewer male couples would report themselves as a couple.

> "Harrisburg is a good city that needs to open its eyes."
> ~ Brett Johnson

That's possible. Residents, not census takers, choose how they want to be identified.

Myers and Adams don't interact with many other gay couples but they acknowledge there is community of like-minded people. In all, Myers says, they have found the city to be very welcoming.

"The only person who has not been supportive is my father," Myers said. Otherwise, they've been "congratulated and given much positive attention over our recent wedding," she said.

Myers is not sure when the Keystone State may get on board with same-sex marriage.

Bottom line

Russ Boggs, president, Central Pennsylvania Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, whose tagline is "Building Business, Creating Community," is a bit more urgent in his pleading. "It's time for the law to catch up with demographics. Same-sex couples live in 99 percent of U.S. counties and that includes a growing number here in the region."

Employers, such as Adams', who offer benefits to same-sex couples already get it, Boggs said.

"Thousands of employers have added spousal-equivalent work benefits including health coverage for their workers with same-sex partners," he said.

Nearly 60 percent of Fortune 500 companies do so.

Treating same-sex partners and their families the same as heterosexual married couples is the same for corporate leaders as not discriminating based upon race, ethnicity, and religion, Boggs said. Same-sex partner benefits are good for the bottom line because they allow businesses to recruit and retain the best and brightest, he said.

Bechtel

Social scene

Michael Bechtel, 22 and single, found the city's bottom line appealing. He wanted to make a "fresh start" in Harrisburg after living in York. Born in Lewisberry, Bechtel thinks job prospects are better in the capital city.

"I have three roommates. We share bills, we're making it," he said.

Brianna Van Arseale and her girlfriend Emily Rowe, both 20, find the city an easy connection point for personal and social scenes. "One guy down on Second Street told me he liked my style," Van Arseale said. The region may be very conservative, she said, but Harrisburg is not. "I don't hide at work. I give honest answers to personal questions."

Van Arseale

Bechtel also sees the city as an easy place to connect with younger gay people.

"The Second Street night life is fun," he said. "So are the traditionally gay and straight-friendly Third and North Street places."

He and friends often bounce between the two locations. The Harrisburg "bounce between" or blurring phenomena between "straight" and "gay" entertainment venues reflects a trend happening all over.

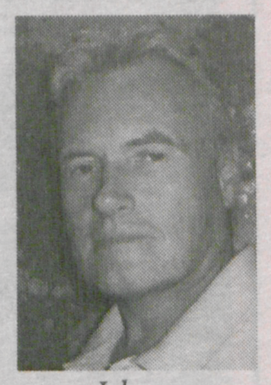
"The whole set up is great," Bechtel said. "I can be independent from family but still close enough to visit, have friends and fun."

Opportunity

The entertainment blur is what Russell Harr, 58, originally from Lingletown, and his partner Brett Johnson, 56, whom he met while living in Los Angeles, wanted to bring into focus when they decided to buy 704 bar on N. Third Street and move here. They thought about their future together and hunted for "opportunity".

Harr

Harr is remembered locally for his appearances in the films "Witness," "Distinguished Gentleman," and "Silence at Bethany" for PBS/American Playhouse Theatre. He continues to administer the Page Program, a "greet and settle them in" component of the Emmys and Oscars, as he has for 10 years. Johnson cultivated a design career in Hollywood and Las Vegas.



Johnson

"The city provided us with an opportunity to use our talents," Johnson said, noting the California economy was faltering long before they arrived here in 2008. As a designer he is impressed with the city's architecture.

"The city is relaxed, friendlier. I feel like we can focus on 'what can be' rather than what always was," Johnson said.

And it can only improve if city officials can find the money for redevelopment and better safety. "There's so much potential sitting idle, the beautiful architecture, but I heard gun shots fired when I left work not too long ago," he said. "Harrisburg is a good city that needs to open its eyes."

Nell suggests one eye opener that involves not only Harrisburg but the state. "It [Pennsylvania] is a good place to retire from but not to die in because our relationship is not recognized in inheritance issues."

York Pride Raises $2,000 for Black & White Party

York Pride, sponsored by Club XS, raised $2,000 for The Black and White Party with their Aug. 13 inaugural event. The original home of the Party from 2007-2010, Club XS has added a third Pride event joining the region's Central Pa Pride Festival and Lancaster Pride.

Stephen Quigley Appointed Ned Smith Center Executive Director

After a national search, Ned Smith Center for Nature and Art recently appointed Stephen V. Quigley as executive director. Quigley succeeds interim executive director Frank H. Felbaum.

Quigley is no stranger to the center and its mission, having played a key role in the planning and building of the Sourbeer and Lick Education Building, completed in 2004, and the Bradenbaugh-Hottenstein Collections Wing, completed earlier this summer.

Quigley's accomplishments include a ten-year term as director of design at H. Edward Black and Associates, Ltd., Harrisburg, and branch manager, TruGreen, Philadelphia. He has experience in professional continuing education, having coached graduate employees to professional registration and developed and implemented internship programs for students from the secondary through collegiate levels.

Quigley also mentors Eagle Scout candidates and volunteers at Stop the Violence Ministry in South Harrisburg. Quigley and his wife Judy have raised five children and reside in Mechanicsburg.

Adrian Shanker New Equality Pennsylvania Board President

Allentown-based organizer Adrian Shanker took the reins as Equality Pennsylvania's board president Sept. 1. Within the last year, Shanker successfully spearheaded campaigns to win same-sex partner benefits in Allentown and Easton, and a non-discrimination law in Bethlehem.

Shanker moves into a seat held for the last two years by Brian Sims. During his tenure the organization moved from a regional organization to a statewide advocacy operation with a statewide board of directors, executive director, and a Harrisburg office. EP has also created the first, statewide LGBT 501(c)(4) political organization and will soon launch a Political Action Committee (PAC).

Other board transitions include incoming vice president, Lisa Kustra, CEO, Plan4Demand. In 2001, former Governor Tom Ridge named Kustra one of the Best 50 Women in Business in Pennsylvania.

Treasurer Kevin Wm Bennett of Erie and Secretary Paul Nardone of Scranton, will continue in their roles.

Additionally, the group elect five new board members, Adam Hymans and Rick Naughton, both of Philadelphia and Dr. Michelle Angello of Wayne, Fiona Hensley of Meadville, and Jessica Rothschild of Scranton.

Hymans is the donor engagement officer, The Philadelphia Foundation, and serves on the boards of the Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition and the William Way LGBT Community Center.

Naughton, an associate with Philadelphia-based, Sellers Dorsey.

Hensley is a senior at Allegheny College, Meadville and recently served as that school's Queers and Allies president and has chaired EP's youth program, SNAP.

Rothschild is in the doctor of physical therapy program, University of Scranton and the founder of Scranton Inclusion, the lgbt student organization and has served with SNAP.

Angello is an adjunct-professor, Widener University, where she developed the first graduate course in the U.S. focusing on clinical issues in transgender communities.

Info: www.equalitypa.org

Lack of Diversity Has Economic Impact

A new study by the Center for Work-Life Policy, featured recently in Harvard Business Review, quantifies the loss to individuals and to the bottom line when organizations fail to create a workplace hospitable to lgbt employees.

The data, based on a survey of 2,952 respondents, show the consequences when lgbt employees are forced to keep their lives and loved ones a secret from colleagues. Among the findings:

1. This is a highly desirable labor pool: ambitious (71%), committed (88% are willing to go the extra mile for employers) and better educated (48% of LGBT respondents have graduate degrees versus 40% of their straight counterparts).

2. Despite a rise in anti-discrimination protections for lgbt employees, 48 percent of lgbt survey respondents reported being closeted at work. Staying in the closet has huge consequences. Those who are out flourish at work, while those who are in the closet languish or leave.

3. LGBT employees who are not out reported significantly greater feelings of being stalled in their careers and greater dissatisfaction with their rates of promotion and advancement.

4. LGBT employees who are not out are 40 percent less likely to trust their employer than those who are out.

5. Employees who remain closeted and isolated are 73 percent more likely to leave their companies within the next three years.

Another recent study estimates the lgbt community's collective buying power at more than $700 billion in the US alone.

According to Sylvia Ann Hewlett, founding President of the Center for Work-Life Policy and a coauthor of the study: "Organizations that encourage all of their employees to bring their whole selves to work have the greatest opportunity for innovation and growth."

"Being 'out' on Wall Street has gone from unimaginable thirty years ago to being widely accepted today with Wall Street helping lead this change," said Todd Sears, an advisor to this study and founder of "Out on the Street," the LGBT Wall Street leadership consortium As Sears points out, "This study clearly shows that there is still a tremendous gap between implementation of lgbt-friendly policies and the ability and decision of employees to come out at work.

Out of Town continued from page 24

Accommodations in Santa Barbara

Four Seasons Biltmore (www.fourseasons.com/santabarbara), magnificent beachfront resort in tony Montecito; Franciscan Inn (www.franciscaninn.com), mid-priced and nicely run hotel within short walk of beach and downtown; Canary Hotel (www.canarysantabarbara.com), stylish downtown property steps from major shopping.

As you leave Santa Barbara (grab breakfast at the outstanding D'Angelo's Bread if you need sustenance), you'll be heading through the most dramatic stretch of scenery along this itinerary. Start by cutting inland slightly to the famed Santa Barbara Wine Country, and the towns of Los Olivos and Santa Ynez - take Hwy. 154 for the best scenery (it's a 45-minute drive). In Los Olivos in particular, you'll find a number of wine-tasting rooms, enticing boutiques, and first-rate restaurants within a few blocks.

Then from Los Olivos, continue up U.S. 101 for an hour to San Luis Obispo County, which takes in the small and attractive county seat as well as the increasingly notable Wine Country town of Paso Robles, which lies about a half-hour north. High-quality and in many cases small-scale wineries abound in this area, as do fine restaurants. San Luis Obispo has a pretty, tree-shaded downtown and a lively personality thanks to the presence of Cal Polytechnic University. You'll find one of the better nightclubs in the area, Native Lounge, which has a mixed gay/straight following, as well as such notable restaurants as Novo, for mod California cuisine; Ciopinot for creative seafood with an Italian accent; and Big Sky Cafe, for the best brunch and breakfast fare in the area.

Fans of wine-touring should really budget an extra night in order to take full advantage of the many vineyards and tasting rooms in the countryside around Paso Robles. For meals, head to the town's leafy and expansive town green, and explore the nearby blocks - you'll find several fantastic dining options, including Thomas Hill Organics Market Bistro and Artisan, both of which specialize in locally sourced provisions prepared with considerable flare.

One attraction in the area absolutely merits a two-hour stop is Hearst Castle, a grandiose antiques- and art-filled palace built by the late publishing tycoon, William Randolph Hearst (reservations for tours are recommended). It's about an hour north of San Luis Obispo, in the tiny village of San Simeon - plan to have lunch afterwards at Sebastian's Store deli, and on your way up from SLO, drive through the bustling fishing village of Morro Bay and the quaint town of Cayucos, which is home to the Brown Butter Cookie Company, whose lightly sea-salted cookies have earned this little bakery a cult following.

Accommodations in San Luis Obispo and Paso Robles: San Luis Creek Lodge (www.sanluiscreeklodge.com), reasonably priced yet upscale property close to downtown San Luis Obispo shopping; Sycamore Springs Resort (www.sycamoresprings.com), century-old spa resort with an emphasis on holistic health; Cambria Pines Lodge (www.cambriapineslodge.com), romantic and gay-friendly hotel set amid magnificent gardens.

From Hearst Castle, the scenery along Highway becomes even more eye-popping - it's about a Next comes a similarly stunning drive up Hwy. 1 through the soaring palisades around Big Sur, and onto the Monterey Peninsula. It's about a two-hour drive to Monterey, but if you're driving through here as the sun is setting, you should budget an extra hour or so for a glass of wine and tapas at the Post Ranch Inn's Sierra Mar restaurant, which is perched on a cliff high above the ocean.

The Monterey Peninsula a favorite destination for several activities, from shopping in the tony village of Carmel to golfing at the famed Pebble Beach resort. As with other stretches of the central coast, it's also well-regarded for its acclaimed wineries, and downtown Monterey has one of the top attractions in the state, the famed Monterey Bay Aquarium, which anchors the touristy but fun Cannery Row district. Among the several terrific restaurants in the area, consider the stellar Passionfish, which has been a leading proponent of sustainable seafood, and Santa Lucia Cafe, a fine spot for breakfast or an afternoon espresso.

Accommodations in Big Sur and Monterey

Post Ranch Inn (www.postranchinn.com), posh and intimate cliff-top hotel in Big Sur; Clement Monterey InterContinental (www.ichotelsgroup.com), opulent hotel just steps in Cannery Row; Mariposa Inn (www.mariposamonterey.com), affordable yet elegant 50-room property with central location.

Drive around Monterey Bay via Hwy. 1 to reach the groovy beach city, Santa Cruz, where you're apt to encounter a mix of surfer dudes, skate punks, and left-wing college students - a colorful scene to say the least. The Municipal Wharf, though kitschy and lined with souvenir stands, is worth checking out. Also stroll along the charmingly faded century-old Santa Cruz Boardwalk, whose half-mile-long wooden roller coaster, the Giant Dipper, has been getting a rise out of tourists since 1924.

At this point you can cheat and sneak up to San Francisco in less than two hours via inland U.S. 101, perhaps stopping in charming Los Gatos, an upscale community in the foothills above San Jose. Stalwarts, however, won't be disappointed by the views enjoyed along Hwy. 1, as it winds the rest of the way up the coast to that splendid City by the Bay.

Andrew Collins covers gay travel for the New York Times-owned website GayTravel.About.com and is the author of Fodor's Gay Guide to the USA. He can be reached care of this publication or at OutofTown@qsyndicate.com.

Black and White Check Presentation

Karen McCraw, left, Shannon McElroy, center, accept a $5,000 check from Mary Beth Ching, right, representing The Black and White Party, an annual fundraising event benefitting Family First Health and The AIDS Fund of South Central Pa, which also received $5,000.

Photo by Chris Carney

Sue Fulton Appointed to West Point Seat

Sue Fulton, a founding Board Member of OutServe, the association of actively serving lgbt military personnel, has been appointed to the U.S. Military Academy Board of Visitors. Fulton, who graduated in 1980 with the first West Point class to include women, is the first openly gay member of the Academy's Board.

"I'm proud to have the opportunity to support the cadets who will lead our Army in the coming years," said Fulton, who served as an Army Captain and company commander after her 1980 graduation. "And I'm pleased that the President is clearly setting the stage for a post-'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' military with appointments like this. It is my honor to continue to serve the Academy and the Army that I love."

"Sue's tireless work for repeal of DADT came from a heartfelt commitment to serving soldiers, and a belief that DADT was harmful to military readiness," said said "JD Smith," OutServe's active-duty co-director, who is identified by a pseudonym while "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" is still in effect. "She's been a company commander; she knows cadets; and she loves West Point. This is a great day for the Academy."

The USMA Board of Visitors, the oldest currently operating Board appointed by the President, is comprised of nine Congress members and six Presidential appointees. Its mission is to provide "independent advice and recommendations" on matters concerning the Academy to the President. Former Congressman Patrick Murphy, an outspoken straight advocate for the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" was recently appointed to the Board.

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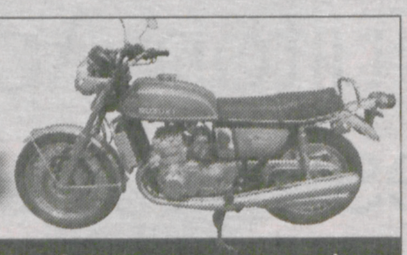

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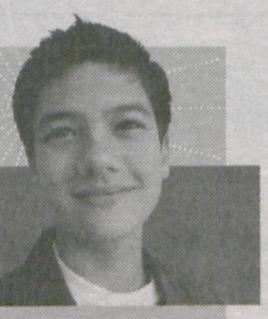

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